

FG2 – The Trio Hit Hogwarts

A/N this is a sequel to 'Fate's Gambit,' if you haven't read that then I'm afraid you won't have a Scooby what's going on here. My original premises didn't take FG as far as Hogwarts so I have had to rethink some aspects. Here's the way the story will continue:

Story is Harry/Hermione/Luna, friendships will be struck with others but trio will remain just that – a trio.

Only one Horcrux (not Harry's scar)

Chapter 1

The summer was throwing up one of those hot, balmy days whose sole purpose appeared to be to remind everyone what they'd be missing as autumn was just around the corner. This was a big day for the trio as they were all Hogwarts bound tomorrow, at the moment they were mounted on brooms, bound at low height and high velocity towards the small, private cemetery on the Potter grounds where Xeno and Dan had been laid to rest.

At least once a week they would fly or ride up to the small walled area, shaded by an ancient oak, where they would refresh the flowers while keeping both fathers up to date with the current news. Harry sat against the tree and watched his girls as they chatted away to the men they loved while removing the dying flora and generally tidying-up around the head stones, the three broomsticks sitting beside him turned his thoughts towards Sirius and drew a smile to his face.

Padfoot would probably be parading around the manor with Danni on his back, her infectious laughter filling the whole house with merriment. Everyone admitted that he'd made a tremendous impact on their lives at a time when they were at their lowest ebb.

With Emma recovering from her injuries and Maia trying to put their lives back in some sort of order it was left to Cas to make all the arrangements. They weren't sure how she managed it but both bodies were released by the separate authorities and they had a private funeral, which Harry still rated as easily the worse day of his

life. The irreplaceable elf once more demonstrated her caring understanding of the situation by packing them all off to the Florida beach house for a much needed change of scenery.

It was a week into this holiday when Cas approached him with a view to bringing his godfather there for a visit, Harry wasn't sure what to do but both his girls pushed him into it; he'd been putting it off too long.

Sirius was more of a nervous wreck than Harry was, one sight of the boy who was the spitting image of his father almost had the marauder in tears, "Hello Harry, I'm your godfather."

Harry looked at him strangely before making a request, "Could you turn into Paddy? I need to be sure."

Sirius morphed into Padfoot and suddenly had a nine-year-old boy, with both arms wrapped around his neck, crying into his fur. To an outsider it was just a boy with his dog, to both participants it was much, much more, "It's all true, I didn't dream it. I remember you." Harry sobbed.

The long remembered scent of his godson proved too much for the animagus as he changed back, with both arms around the sobbing boy, to find himself confronted by two young girls with wands in their hands and retaliation in their hearts.

A white phoenix flamed onto the brown haired girl's shoulders and its song was like throwing a switch as both young ladies suddenly joined the hug. "Sorry sir, we thought you had hurt Harry," the brown haired girl said as the shocks just kept piling up for Sirius.

"It would take more than Sirius Black to hurt Harry in a room with Cas and Hedwig though when did you two get so fast!"

"Maia Lovegood?" squawked Sirius, "Everyone thinks you're dead!" Understanding flashed across his face as he looked down to the little blond girl, "Can I assume that you are Luna?"

Her nod brought a tight hug along with realization that they were far safer with people believing they'd died.

Harry finished the introductions, "This is Hermione and that's her mother, Emma, I thought you were all going to stay sunbathing on the deck?"

"We were," answered Emma, "Until these two took off like a rocket and where did you get those wands?"

Luna and Hermione just glanced at one another, "Em, we just needed them and they appeared in our hands, they were in our bedroom."

"Mr Black, the plan was to let you have some time alone with Harry but, since these two scamps put paid to that, would you care to join us for some iced tea?" Emma's joking tone took any sting from the remark, that and the way both girls rolled their eyes at her.

"It's good to see you again Sirius."

He swung around at the well remembered voice and choked, he didn't want to break down here but this was the couple who took him in and he'd let their family down in the worse possible way. "Jonathon and Martha, you have no idea how sorry I am. We thought we were being so clever choosing the rat to keep their secret and I got James and Lily murdered. Then I was utterly blinded by my need for revenge, I went after him instead of fulfilling my obligations and taking Harry from Hagrid. I won't ask for your forgiveness because I will never forgive myself."

"Sirius my boy, it gives me no pleasure to say this, but you were all babes in the woods caught between two master manipulators, you didn't have a chance. We made a mistake a few weeks ago that a good man paid for, the people we're up against are ruthless. These three are going to be very powerful but will need Harry's godfather to help guide them through the lies and deceit they'll undoubtedly be faced with. This isn't going away and Potters don't do hiding well, we'll face this on our own terms and fight as dirty as we have to."

This was a different Jonathon Potter for most of the occupants of the room but Sirius recognised the man who'd easily faced down his parents. They'd tried to make trouble at Sirius living there, after

leaving home before turning seventeen. Jonathon had stood shoulder to shoulder with Sirius and told them to crawl back to their dark lord, Sirius Black would not be joining the death eater ranks.

Sirius turned to his godson, "Harry I would do anything to help you and your two bond mates, I just want to play a part in your lives."

Three curious voices asked in unison, "Bond mates?"

This was met with total silence until Martha burst out laughing, "Sirius Black you haven't changed a bit, not here for ten minutes and already causing mayhem."

"We hadn't intended to tell them in case it spoiled anything," explained Maia.

The trio considered each other awkwardly until Luna broke the ice, "Well I don't feel any differently about you both now or myself."

Hermione thought about it for a second, "I don't even know what 'bond mate' means and as long as we're together I don't care."

Harry took both their hands and said, "Forever!"

The resulting glow drew a "Merlin's beard!" from Sirius and a comment from Cas, "That's nothing, you should have seen it the night their bond finalised."

"Eh, I have no idea what to do or say at the moment so I think I will just keep quiet so as not to put my paw in it again." The group led Sirius out to the deck while he fought his natural urges to check out these two gorgeous women in shorts and tee shirts, if the girls grew to be half as beautiful as their mothers then Harry was one lucky pup.

After his experience with Nymphadora, Sirius waited till he could have a quiet word with Maia and Emma before mentioning brooms to the kids, the blond witch forever won a place in his heart with her answer, "As long as you're prepared to teach them how to fly then I have no objections." Emma deferred the decision to Maia as this was her area

of expertise, the two mothers had formed a great relationship as they tried to pilot their children's future between muggle and magical.

Sirius stayed for the weekend and taught them to fly on their warded beach, some deep wounds began healing that first weekend.

Harry's day dreaming was interrupted by Hermione and Luna both cuddling into him as they lay in the shade of their favourite tree, tomorrow was going to be a very big day no matter how prepared they were.

-oOoOo-

At the Burrow another young girl was in tears at the behaviour of her brother Ron, the prat had went mental at her because she had everything new for Hogwarts. The jealous git was refusing to even acknowledge she was his sister, claiming she got new stuff while everything he had was rubbish. The moron conveniently forgot she got the gold from selling her book that had broke Dumbledore's nose, the same Dumbledore who was still headmaster at Hogwarts where she was heading tomorrow. She was going to share her gold with him but his jealous rage had ended that idea very quickly, he could go to Hogwarts in his underwear for all she cared now.

Fred and George had promised to take care of her but with those two you were never sure whether that was a good thing or not, Percy's head was so far up his own backside she wasn't sure the Head Boy would even speak to her at Hogwarts. The magical world had hit a bit of a slump when Harry Potter didn't turn up at Hogwarts last year and Ginny herself would have been really looking forward to the express tomorrow if her hero had been on it.

She would just have to hope she made some friends when she was there, if not it could be a long seven years.

-oOoOo-

Chance was sick and tired of the constant smirk that Fate was wearing these days, it just didn't sit well on her face. Things were going so well for her golden trio that it was time for him to lend a hand,

this was how a certain black diary found itself in the possession of a child who was heading for Hogwarts on the morrow.

He just hoped she was eating that infernal popcorn when she made the discovery as it would make a great headline, Fate choked to death by Chance!

-oOoOo-

The seven strong family made its way onto the magical platform, Harry had Luna and Hermione on each arm with little Danni riding in her favourite position, sitting on her big brother's shoulders. Sirius had Emma and Maia either side of him with the group drawing attention to themselves. This was their 'outing' in the magical community but, with the three kids going to Hogwarts, the Lovegood's survival would be all over the Prophet tomorrow anyway.

Danielle Granger was currently clinging to Harry as if her little life depended on it, the toddler, who was a mini-Hermione look alike, loved her two sisters but was as doted on her big brother as Harry was on her.

Sirius managed to coax Danni into his arms while both mothers kissed their three children goodbye as the trio boarded the express, the poor little tyke was bawling her eyes out as she watched her three sibling's wave from their carriage window.

The three had just sat back down when a small red haired girl opened the door and ask if she could sit with them.

Harry was up and helping her with a rather heavy trunk as Luna replied, "Of course you can Ginny, it's really good to see you again." Harry was just in time to catch the girl as she promptly fainted when she recognised Luna.

Ginny came back round to find her head resting on a boy's lap, "Hello there, just lie still for a moment, that was quite a fright you got just now." She was looking into the greenest eyes she'd ever seen, but it was only when she noticed the lightning shaped scar above those dreamy orbs that her body was once again flooded with recognition.

She was lying in Harry Potter's lap! This caused her to faint again though, thankfully she didn't need to be caught this time.

"One look into his eyes and the girl faints, we're really going to have to keep a watch him Luna."

"I don't know Hermione, I'm quite partial to getting lost in those eyes myself. I think those new contacts he got for his birthday just added to the power."

Both girls could no longer hold their laughter, "Oh very funny, now what do I do with the cute red head on my lap?"

This killed the laughter instantly, "Think she's cute Potter?" the menace in Hermione's voice was easily discernable and Harry burst out laughing.

"You should see your faces!" His face then grew serious, "Never doubt how I feel for you both, the only other girl in my heart has the cutest dimples and is two-years-old."

Hermione gave him a kiss by way of an apology, quickly followed by Luna as Ginny began to stir, "Ok I'm going to kill Fred and George for whatever they gave me, otherwise I would have to believe I was in Harry Potter's lap while he kisses my dead friend."

"Now Ginny, I'll have you know Harry doesn't kiss dead girls, though any other girl trying to kiss him might end up that way. I would advise you to get up though before Hermione here starts to get jealous."

Ginny sprang up and grabbed her friend in a hug, "I thought you were gone, why didn't you let anyone know you were still alive?"

"After what happened with dad, mum and I decided we would be safer if people weren't looking for us. I'm sorry Ginny but we couldn't let anyone know, Hermione's dad was killed in an accident the same day so we've been very careful where we went in Britain."

Ginny was bemused, "What do you mean, 'in Britain', have you been out the country?"

"Let's get your trunk stowed away then we can chat, how come you're alone, where's your brothers?"

"Oh I hit Dumbledore with a book which someone then bought for a lot of gold so Ron's dead jealous, then Percy's rat turned out to be a criminal but dad wouldn't take any reward for that."

Harry butted in, "All Sirius could find out was that a little girl had noticed a pet rat was missing a toe, that was you?" Ginny nodded so Harry continued, "There's a new broom at our house that Sirius bought for you, we can get it whenever you want. I would also like to say that House Potter is in your debt, anything we can do for you is there for the asking."

Ginny was blushing furiously as she sat across from them, "Why didn't you come to Hogwarts last year Harry, everyone was expecting you and Ron had already made his mind up you'd both be best friends."

"While Hermione and I got our letters, Luna didn't so we decided to wait. I'm pretty sure she would have been allowed to attend had I asked but, as you said, everyone was expecting us last year. We have learned not to do what everyone expects, it's a lot safer that way."

Ginny could see the logic in that, the whole of magical Britain was holding its breath, awaiting the return of its saviour, when said saviour didn't appear everyone thought he'd gone forever. Now he was sitting on the Hogwarts express with nobody paying him any notice. That was proven wrong as the door opened to admit three boys in Slytherin robes.

Noticing the smart apparel of the compartment's occupants, the group's leader decided to honour them with his words of wisdom, "So refreshing to see a compartment with the right type of people in it, I'm Draco Malfoy and I can point you in the direction of the people you don't want to associate with."

Draco found himself staring into a pair of eyes that were almost silver in colour, the girls blond hair was billowing around her head due to the amount of magical energy she was currently displaying. It was an awesome sight but the main reason Draco couldn't take his eyes of the spectacle before him was that Luna had her wand currently embedded underneath his chin.

When she spoke the sing-song pitch that was such a lovely feature of her normal speaking voice had been replaced by a quality that would make stronger men than Draco Malfoy quake, "Place yourself right at the top of that list because that piece of death eater scum you called a father murdered my dad, I was prepared to give his son the benefit of the doubt but that's gone now. Stay away from me and mine or I'll take my revenge on you personally."

Luna lowered her wand and Draco took this as a sign of weakness, "You're the bitch that stole half my inheritance, just you wait because..." Luna had no intention of waiting, she exploded into action.

One of the things Sirius had taught them was how to throw a punch, lowering her wand had turned her body to the perfect angle for delivery, a powerful left hook connected with pin point accuracy on Draco's jaw and the blond Slytherin folded like a deck chair.

Ginny couldn't believe it, "Luna you're going to get in trouble before we even get to Hogwarts."

Luna just laughed, "Do you think prince Draco here will want it to get out that a little girl dumped him on his arse? I can guarantee he won't be mentioning this to anyone, never mind a teacher."

His two companions had played no part in the proceedings because, like Draco, both had wands pushing into their faces. After their leader had been so easily dispatched by a girl they were allowed to carefully remove him from the compartment floor, with Hermione closing the door behind them.

Harry gently took Luna's bruised hand and began to cast healing charms on it, "Harry, am I a bad person for enjoying inflicting pain on another?"

"Luna love, you could have chopped that bastard into bite sized pieces and served him up as an appetizer at tonight's welcome feast, you still wouldn't be a bad person. That boy's trouble and will meet a sticky end." Harry kissed her now healed hand before drawing Luna into him and kissing her lips.

Hermione pulled a face, "Ew Harry that's a gross image! Eating pieces of that arsehole would be enough to turn anyone into a committed vegetarian."

Hermione also received a kiss before the trio sat back down to see Ginny sitting there with her mouth hanging open. Of all the shocks she'd received today, the biggest one was when Harry was healing Luna's hand. The spells he was using must have interfered with the concealment charm because Ginny clearly saw the wedding ring on Luna's finger.

She looked at the two girls cuddling into Harry and she had to know, "You're married! To both of them?"

Luna giggled, "We have a lot of catching up to do Ginny, the last three years have been quite a wild ride."

"The turning point for me was Hermione's tenth birthday, her mum hadn't been feeling well and Maia was worried in case it was a set back in her healing, turns out she was pregnant and the twenty eighth of March saw Danielle Granger make an appearance." The look of bliss on Harry's face was unmistakable as was the pretend pout Luna adopted.

"We sometimes think Harry loves Danni more than us."

"Well Danni certainly loves Harry more than us." Hermione couldn't hold the pout though and both girls were soon giggling again.

Harry wasn't in the slightest embarrassed though, "Ginny, Luna told us you have six brothers so you may not understand this, until Danni came along we three were all from families with one child. I will happily admit I love my little sis to bits."

"I thought she was Hermione's sister?" a confused Ginny asked.

Hermione tried to explain their family unit, "We have two mothers, a godfather and a sister. It may seem strange to outsiders but so does the three of us being married. It works for us so we don't care about anyone else."

Luna agreed, "When Sirius introduced Remus and the Tonks family we all spent that first Christmas together, knowing Danni was on the way gave us all something to look forward to and its only got better since. Nym Tonks is in seventh year and she's a brilliant laugh, dead clever too."

They chatted all the way to Hogsmead as a friendship was renewed and another two formed, the trio's bond meant they shared everything and they wouldn't have it any other way.

-oOoOo-

"First years, first years, over here!" boomed out above their heads. Who needed a public address system when you had Hagrid.

"No more than four to a boat now."

Harry approached the large man, "Excuse me Mr Hagrid, my godfather says he'd like his motorbike back though our mum's say you should keep it."

Hagrid's eyes nearly popped out his head and, in a voice that could probably be heard in the castle, announced Harry's identity to his year mates. "No, it can' be, yer Harry Potter!"

Ginny joined the trio as they got their first glimpse of Hogwarts castle, with its lights reflecting on the water it was a magnificent sight.

They'd no sooner disembarked the boats than Harry spotted Hagrid 'whispering' to a stern looking woman that matched his godfather's description of McGonagall, his gesturing in Harry's direction ended any doubts on the topic of their discussions.

She fixed him with her steely gaze, "Mr Potter, it's not customary to show up a year late with no warning, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"It's actually Lord Potter, Mrs McGonagall. I understand it's not customary to have children locked in cupboards but that's what the headmaster of this place arranged for me so I'm not too bothered about his paperwork issues."

"LORD Potter, the headmaster had you watched but no mistreatment was reported to him."

"Ah but you see PROFESSOR McGonagall that's where I have the problem, Mrs Figg is a kindly woman who was always slipping me bits of food or putting ointment on my injuries any time I was in her house. I just don't believe that lovely woman would not report what she saw, her many cats lived a better life than I did."

McGonagall was shocked into silence, would Albus lie about having knowledge of the abuse Harry suffered? Her answer was self evident in the boy standing here, of course the old bastard would.

"Professor, my godfather speaks very highly of you and that's probably the only reason I'm here. I would much rather have attended another school abroad but Sirius asked me to give Hogwarts a chance, I have to say discussing my business in a corridor along with my year mates is not a good first impression."

"I apologise Lord Potter and promise this will not happen again, I was just shocked to see you standing there. I'm delighted you've given Hogwarts a chance and will endeavour to ensure that's a decision you never regret. May I just add that I hope you take after your mother more than your father in your studies, Hogwarts couldn't cope with the marauders heir and the Weasley twins at the same time."

Harry turned on the charm full blast, the whole incident had been planned with Sirius and Remus to get McGonagall on their side from the beginning. "Thank you professor, I can see my godfather's high opinion of you is well deserved. I look forward to your classes and know I'll enjoy them."

McGonagall not only smiled but practically skipped towards the great hall as Ginny grabbed both Mrs Potters, "Merlin's beard, McGonagall's a dragon, how the hell did Harry manage that?"

"Spends way too much time with Sirius."

"When that man turns on the charm no woman is safe."

"Except our mum's of course."

"Because he knows we would stake him to the beach at low tide."

"And sit drinking juice watching the sea level rise."

Ginny was forcibly reminded of the twins until an arm went round her shoulders, "Don't worry Ginny, you'll get used to us the more you hang out with us."

She was only catching the left over's of what McGonagall received and it made her knees weak, to think she'd been worried she wouldn't make any friends.

-oOoOo-

Albus was sitting on his throne, paying minimal attention to the sorting, as his obsession was once more at the forefront of his mind, Harry Potter.

The brat now had three years with Black and Albus hadn't been able to find hide nor hair of them, to make matters worse his every move was being watched and scrutinised.

Last year he'd tried to bring Flamel's stone into the castle as a challenge / trap for Potter and his staff had revolted, Minerva had

threatened to take it to the board. He was forced to defeat Quirrell / Voldemort himself and even that backfired, instead of praise that bitch Skeeter couldn't wait to point out that it was him who gave Quirrell the job of teaching the students Defence of the Dark Arts.

His disenchantment with the proceedings were shattered by Minerva shouting, "Lord Harry Potter."

Like everyone in the hall Albus had his eyes locked on the handsome young wizard who casually strolled towards the stool, oozing confidence. Black's influence was there for all to see as he placed the sorting hat on his head.

All sound and movement in the hall had ceased as they waited on the hat's decision, when the hat spoke nobody was sure what had just happened, "NEXT!"

McGonagall just stood there until the hat spoke to her again, "Could we have the next student please!" the sarcasm on the word 'please' was unmistakable.

Her list had been magically updated so she checked the name below Harry's and almost choked as she read it out, "Lady Hermione Potter."

Hermione walked over and took Harry's hand, the hat was still on his head as it spoke again, "Could we have the next one as well professor."

The colour drained from Minerva's face as she saw the next name, it was with a dry mouth she announced, "Lady Luna Potter."

There were gasps as the girl thought to be dead walked towards her bond mates, she stopped in front of Dumbledore though to deliver a message, "Hello Professor, my mother was wondering if you saw the death eaters who set the dark mark above our home, her lab exploded just after you left so you practically must have walked right into them."

She left, not expecting an answer from the bombshell that everyone in the hall had heard. She took Harry's hand before linking her other with Hermione.

"Right, now you're all here I can get on with the sorting, mmm...bravery that would make a Gryffindor proud yet with ambition that wouldn't go amiss in Slytherin. Easily intelligent enough to be placed in Ravenclaw but you're main trait by far is loyalty which means HUFFLEPUFF!"

Harry removed the hat and placed it on the stool before escorting his girls to their house table, it was about this time that Hufflepuff woke up to the fact that their much maligned and overlooked house had just been thrust centre stage. Their delayed applause was initiated by Nym's loud whoop of joy, before being more than compensated for by its sheer volume and sincerity, it was thunderous.

The rest of the sorting was overshadowed though all three Potters applauded loudly as Ginny made Gryffindor. It was a visibly shaken Dumbledore who stood to deliver his welcoming speech, little did he know there was a lot more to come.

He'd barely made the podium when the whole hall's attention was again captivated by the Potters, Harry stood and helped both his wives to their feet before the trio headed towards the doors leading out of the great hall.

"Mr Potter, where are you going?"

A red haired boy from Gryffindor shouted, "He didn't get into Gryffindor so he's going home with his tail between his legs."

The resulting smack and Ginny's voice saying, "Shut-it Ron, you're a moron," was heard by everyone.

"Mr Dumbledore, my wives and I are heading home for our dinner. Professor McGonagall is it still the case that timetables are handed out tomorrow morning?"

"Yes Lord Potter, that is correct," answered Minerva, her mind still reeling from Luna's revelation that Albus had visited the Lovegoods home that terrible morning, the fact that he'd never mentioned it in three years combined with Harry's news of Arabella was leading to conclusions that were making her feel sick.

"Thank you professor, we shall return then. Please be aware we shall be attending Hogwarts as part time students and not boarding, taking only Transfiguration, Charms and Herbology. We intend to continue our non-magical education."

"Your decision raises a number of issues MR Potter but first I feel it necessary to defend the reputation of my school and ask why only those subjects were chosen." Albus was not a happy headmaster.

"Those are the only first year courses we consider taught to an acceptable level."

The girls started justifying their decision with Hermione going first, "The ministry of magic won't allow facts to be taught that shows them in anything but a good light therefore the course doesn't contain any material from the last two centuries. The OWL's and NEWT's for this subject are not recognised anywhere outside the British Isles for this purpose. I won't mention the teacher because my parents taught me not to speak ill of the dead."

Luna took over without missing a beat, "Defence is a disaster and no one in the literary world takes Lockhart seriously, far less believes his outlandish claims he makes in his books." The professor in question was ready to take issue with that statement but thought better of it, there were three of them after all.

Hermione continued, "Non magical astronomy far outstrips its magical counterpart with even a telescope in space sending back images you wouldn't believe." Professor Aurora appeared more interested than upset though she was drawing daggers at the Muggle Studies professor for not informing her of these breakthroughs.

Luna glanced towards Professor Kettleburn, “A care of magical creatures professor with more limbs missing than he has remaining hardly inspires confidence in the knowledge of his subject.”

Harry wanted to deliver this bit of news himself, “For the last twelve years Hogwarts has had a lower passing grade in potions per student head than any other school in Europe or the Americas, it’s probably wider than that but those were the only continent’s published results we could get our hands on. We already have a private tutor and Ginny you’re welcome to join us.”

Cries of “Me to!” started at the Hufflepuff table but quickly spread to the Gryffs and Claws, leaving Albus and a certain potions master livid.

“The three subjects we intend to take, as well as Arithmancy and Ancient Runes are the only courses in Hogwarts that make the top five in the European leaderboard of magical schools. We would be quite happy to share copies of this official information with anyone who wants it. In the non magical world information like this is published openly to allow parents to choose the best schools for their children, the ministry publishes the figures on a notice board deep within the ministry building for a week before removing them, thus fulfilling their legal obligations.”

“Lord Potter how is it you have access to this information that even I have never seen?” Minerva asked.

“Both myself and my godfather are Lords of ancient families, this tends to add credence to our requests,” Harry had no intention of telling her the goblins had arranged everything for them. “It is our intention to supply copies of these documents to Madam’s Longbottom and Bones as we applaud their stance on more open government, we also have a copy for the journalist Miss Skeeter.”

Sirius and Remus had been sure this would push Dumbledore over the edge, the old wizard thrived on knowing everything and controlling that information. The plan was to get him off balance and keep him that way, his visible flinch at the mention of Rita’s name confirmed their plan was working.

"I must ask you how you three propose to travel between your home and Hogwarts, we are also required to have your address on record." Albus countered but again they were prepared.

Hermione answered in her most officious and annoying voice, "Transport is only an issue if we request aid from the ministry or school, we are doing neither. Also, since this will not be our main education establishment, as we're only taking three classes and not boarding, that information is not required."

"I must insist on knowing your method of transport, we take security very seriously at Hogwarts and anything that can breach that must be investigated."

Luna's sing-song voice was back in full force, "Is that why you had Voldemort teaching here last year, so you could keep an eye on him. Oh you're so clever Mr Dumbledore."

"You will show the headmaster respect," screamed a fuming Snape.

He was coldly answered by Harry, "I would ask you to show the Lady Potter respect and also tell you to keep that nose out of things that don't concern you, my family has suffered enough with your nose poking into things that were none of your business. Tell me Snape, was that particular incident brought up at your closed doors death eater trial? I would be prepared to bet my vaults it wasn't, your actions that night cost me my parents."

Dumbledore was fit to burst as he roared, "Where are you getting your information boy?"

"Bellatrix Lestrange used to taunt Sirius with it every night, as if being innocent in Azkaban wasn't enough he had no option but to listen to that crazy bitch shouting up the corridor how Snape pointed his master at the Potters and Longbottoms yet ended up free, teaching children no less. I also have in my possession an orb from the department of mysteries, I'm sure you know which one." With Neville Longbottom and Susan Bones in the hall, the Potters were confident that information would soon be winging its way to the correct people, ensuring swift action would be taken.

Luna had been concentrating on predicting an attack, she saw the curse coming before Snape had even drawn his wand and their bond assured all three saw it in plenty of time. The instant it was fired the Potters had already moved and with their wands in hand, a disarming spell, levicorpus and a spell only Luna could have come up with left Snape wandless, dangling in the air by his ankle and displaying his colourful 'my little pony' underwear for the entire hall to see, she'd thankfully tagged on a silencing charm as well which was making Snape even more infuriated.

A sharp yelp was heard behind them before a reassuring voice offered an explanation, "Don't worry guys, I got your rear covered. Just my creepy cousin Draco trying to curse you in the back, like father, like son I suppose."

"Thanks Nym, appreciate that," Harry glanced in Luna's direction but she just shrugged, 'I knew Nym was there and it's only Malfoy,' was her answer over the bond which left Hermione sniggering.

The other students were in awe of this display, three firsties had just destroyed Snape. The thought of private tuition was now running rife, especially since their new defence professor dived below the teachers table at the first spell cast and had yet to re-appear.

"Well ladies and gentlemen it's been fun and we must do this again sometime but we're all getting hungry. If we're not home soon then Cas will get cross with us and that is something definitely to be avoided, so goodnight one and all."

The spell that left Dumbledore's wand sealed the doors, "I'm afraid I can't allow that my boy, you are in possession of information that shouldn't be known. You're welcome to eat here and then we can retire to my office and discuss this matter in a civilised manner with no more talk of this part-time nonsense."

"Listen closely my old man, there's more chance of your buddy Snape there being chosen to be the next model for head & shoulders shampoo than there is of my wives and I entering your office voluntary."

“Whether it’s voluntary or not is your only choice in the matter.”

Sirius and Remus had predicted the events with an accuracy Luna would have been hard pushed to match, no one questioned, far less challenged Dumbledore’s actions in front of the students and talking about it later would prove too late for their memories. This really was a crock of shit that they intended to give a right good disinfecting to. He couldn’t help but be in awe of the marauders, with his dad involved too they really must have been something in their Hogwarts years.

“I’m afraid you’ve overstepped the bounds of your remit as headmaster, but then overstepping your authority has never been a problem for you. This time though you’re not dealing with someone simpleton who thinks you’re a wonderful wizard only out to help everyone, I challenge you to an honour duel.”

Albus couldn’t believe his luck, the boy had made a big impression in the hall tonight but was now giving him the opportunity to show everyone just what a jumped up little whelp he was before getting him alone and obliterating the shit out of him. Albus was just about to shout his reluctant acceptance when Harry sprang the marauders trap firmly in his face.

“I, Lord Harry James Potter challenge Albus Dumbledore to an honour duel by phoenix!”

A/N thanks for reading

Chapter 2

“I, Lord Harry James Potter challenge Albus Dumbledore to an honour duel by phoenix!”

Albus understood the words spoken but had no idea what they meant, he heard a noise behind him and looked round to see Filius jumping up and down on top of the staff's table, clapping his hands in excitement.

“Oh Lord Potter I saw one of those when I was a young wizard, travelling through Asia. You may have the name wrong though because they called it an honour trial by phoenix, where two parties have reached an impasse, both agree to accept the decision of the phoenix on who is in the right. It's a very clever way to avoid bloodshed and, as the phoenix is a creature of light, it will always make the correct choice.”

Albus could hardly contain his glee, Fawkes had been bound to him for over half a century and he had explored ways to make his phoenix do whatever he commanded. This was going to be over fast, he'd still get to maintain what was left of his reputation and then he could set about using the two girls to get Potter to do what he wanted, “I accept the honour challenge by phoenix and agree to abide by the outcome.”

Fawkes flashed into the great hall, settling on Dumbledore's shoulder, thus creating a powerful image of a wizard and his magical familiar.

Harry's smile was predatory, “Thank you for that explanation Professor Flitwick, though correct in the description of a phoenix trial, I fear I must point out your conclusion was wrong. I did indeed specify an honour duel by phoenix, this means Mr Dumbledore's honour in this matter will be represented by his phoenix while the Potter honour will be defended by my best friend, Hedwig.”

The beautiful white phoenix burst into view from a fireball, right at ceiling level, she then slowly and majestically spiralled down towards her chicks, magical singing mesmerising the entire hall and turning the enchanted ceiling into a sunny afternoon.

For a collective group of people to whom so-called mythical creatures like dragons and unicorns were almost commonplace, actually seeing a white phoenix was an experience none of them ever believed they would encounter. To see this regal creature of legend land gently on Harry Potter's shoulder and then encompass the two girls with its wings was breathtaking; Hagrid was in floods of tears while wearing a gigantic grin.

Fawkes left Albus, flying slowly and sombrely towards the group, landing in front of them and spreading his wings wide before bowing to the white phoenix. There was a conversation between them, held in song, which all of the Potters could easily follow but a dumbfounded Dumbledore could not.

After a few minutes Hedwig suddenly emitted a ferocious screech before launching herself at her competitor, Fawkes never moved a millimetre but, just as Hedwig's claws looked certain to tear the other phoenix apart, the lower half of her body transformed into a fiery furnace. It was almost as if Hedwig was attempting to flame out but changed her mind half way through the procedure, the effect on Fawkes was devastating. The fierce flames engulfed the magical creature and, where there once had been a noble phoenix, now all that remained on a floor, cracked by the intense heat was a pile of ash.

The effect on Dumbledore was pretty powerful as well; the energy backlash threw him backwards, with the massive teacher's table breaking his momentum as well as his pelvis.

Hedwig landed on the floor and began singing softly to the pile of ashes while Luna stepped forward and started carefully parting the rapidly cooling ash with her hands until she found the ugly chick. Gently picking the featherless creature up by cradling him in both hands she stood and faced Dumbledore. He was lying half on, half off the teacher's table and groaning in agony, he got no sympathy from the blond Lady Potter.

"Resorting to spells and rituals that would ensure Fawkes remained bound to you ranks up there with your treatment of our Harry. My

mother always wondered how you got through our wards but now we know. You forced Fawkes to take you into our home, had my mother died Fawkes would have assisted you in carrying out a murder, this would have ended his life as well. What blasted you backwards was the termination of your familiar bond, Hedwig judged you not worthy to have a phoenix companion, Fawkes agreed and would have left years ago had you not interfered with the bond. You are a despicable old man who doesn't care who he hurts, be it child or phoenix, in your quest for personal recognition. My daddy recognised you for what you are and was by far a greater wizard than you'll ever be."

She felt an arm snake around her waist as her husband kissed her cheek, "I agree with everything my wife just said, I would also like to add that we've been berated on the express, had a curse fired at us by a professor, an attempted sneak attack by a student and an illegal incarceration attempt by the headmaster, it stops now! We've been lenient because it's day one but the next incident will be met with appropriate force, anyone thinking of attacking us this is the only warning you're going to get."

Hedwig sang as she flew onto Harry's shoulder and had all three Potters laughing, "Hedwig says we only get to deal with you if she doesn't get there first, she is rather protective of us, aren't you girl?" Harry was stroking her as she drew Luna and Hermione into her using those massive white wings. Hedwig was staring at those in the hall, her gaze almost daring them to try something against her chicks. The message of promised retribution was transmitted from Hedwig's expression far more effectively than Harry's words could ever convey. She may be a creature of the light but that didn't mean Hedwig hadn't frightened the life out of everyone when she attacked Fawkes.

Dumbledore and his phoenix may have seemed a powerful image but the three Potters with the hugely symbolic white phoenix was infinitely more so, there was a new 'leader of the light' and nobody could dispute his credentials as long as Hedwig sat proudly on his shoulder. This was especially poignant since Luna held the defeated Fawkes cradled in her hands and, relegated to the background, Dumbledore still lay moaning in agony across the table.

None of the staff had dared to move yet, their shock freezing them in position, except Snape who Hermione had added a bit of spin to. He was currently pirouetting around the ankle he was suspended in the air by, gesturing wildly with his arms while screaming abuse behind the silencing charm.

“Hey Nym, care to join us for dinner? Your mum and dad are going to be there.” Harry asked.

McGonagall finally came out of her stupor and indicated the school healer should attend the headmaster before rounding on the group, “Lord Potter, you can’t just pop in and out of here as it pleases you, taking anyone with you that you want.”

Hermione was having none of it, “Professor McGonagall, I’m surprised at you. A lie of omission is still a lie; you know perfectly well that this is a school, not a prison. All an underage student needs to leave the castle is a permission slip signed by their guardian, Students of age are only required to inform a member of staff they’re leaving.”

“Is this true?” Nym asked as the entire hall listened in with great interest.

“Of course it’s true Nym, you’re of age and can leave here every night if you wish, the staff don’t want this known because they need the older students to stay here and look after the younger ones. Do you honestly think the number of staff behind me and one caretaker could look after all the students without the prefects and of age student’s help? That’s all very well if you wish to do that but denying you other options by withholding information is just wrong.”

Pomona Sprout had been in a stupor since the sorting hat said ‘Hufflepuff’ in relation to the Potters, her house didn’t get the prominent students, far less the greatest celebrities in the wizarding world. She felt compelled as the head of Hufflepuff to say something, “Lady Potter, how could you possibly know all this?” Pomona asked.

Hermione removed a slim volume, bound in dragon skin, from her robes, "Why Professor from this great little book, 'Things Hogwarts doesn't want students to know' by the Marauders. You wouldn't believe the interesting things that are in here."

"You know the Marauders?"

"They're our hero's!"

"Can you introduce us?"

The two redheaded twins had such looks of pleading on their faces that they would have put little Danni to shame, Harry and Hermione were chuckling as Luna answered them. "Fred and George, write and ask your mum for permission to stay with us this weekend, you too Ginny as it will let you pick up your new broom from Sirius."

Ron went into meltdown, "Why the hell does she get a new broom and who'd want these two staying for the weekend? I'm starving here and you lot are holding up the food, bloody mental the lot of you!"

Luna saved his life by holding up her hand to stop the other three getting into trouble, "Guys, if you get a detention then you can be legitimately stopped from going, it's all in the book. Ronald you are not invited and I must warn you three Weasley's, our sister can sometimes say horrible things too when she gets upset, she is only two though."

The sniggering around the hall was interrupted by Professor Sprout, "Lady Hermione, sorry for being familiar but two Lady Potters could get confusing, could I have a read at that book please?"

Hermione just smiled, "That's quite alright professor but this is a signed original, we will soon have copies for sale with all proceeds going to St Mungo's, though I'm sure we could spring a copy for our head of house by tomorrow."

Nym approached, "Professor Sprout, I shall be leaving the castle tonight and return with the Potters in the morning."

McGonagall's lips were pressed shut so tight that they almost disappeared, if all of the upper classes started leaving at night and on weekends they would have to employ extra staff. While the castle elves kept the place running smoothly they were not a wizarding acceptable option for supervising the students.

The Potters pulled Nym into a huddle as Hedwig flashed them out of the most memorable opening feast in living memory. Minerva was about to send the students off to their dorms when she remembered that the feast hadn't even taken place yet, it just seemed like a long night as Poppy levitated the headmaster out the hall towards her domain.

Albus felt the eyes of every student on him as he was levitated out the great hall, gone was the reverence, awe and even respect as his face grimaced again in pain. He'd just been defeated in his great hall by three students yet to receive any magical training, humiliation was the only term that came to mind. At least he had the satisfaction of knowing he was right about one thing, it was all over fast.

The white phoenix terrified the old wizard, who would age even faster now he wasn't in receipt of power from Fawkes. What really terrified him though was that the appearance of the white phoenix, bound to the Potters at this time. This alluded to a higher power controlling their destinies, Albus knew that any higher power judging him would find the old wizard wanting, his next great adventure might be upon him quicker than he thought and not now something to be looked forward to.

With the hall settling down and starting to eat, Gilderoy felt it was now safe to come out from under the table, maybe this teaching gig wasn't such a good idea after all, though the extra book sales had been more than welcome. He saw a fellow professor, wearing rather fetching underwear, still dangling in the air over the table. Sensing his chance to shine, Gilderoy took out his wand and cast Finite Incantatem on the wizard.

A still yelling, but now un-muted Snape found himself dropping head first into a platter of roast potatoes before scattering food everywhere

as the rest of his body followed his head and hit the feast laden staff table.

Snape was now angry beyond reason as the food covered potions professor searched for his wand amongst the culinary carnage, "The brats are going to die a slow, painful death when I get my wand on..." Snape didn't finish his rant due to Pomona having one hand on his throat while the other had her wand pushing roast potato even further up the hated wizard's right nostril.

"Listen to me you petty little man, go anywhere near my puffs and I swear you'll be fertiliser in greenhouse number five before the sun sets. You're nothing but an arrogant little bully whose actions are reprehensible for a human being, far less a professor who proposes to teach children. You crossed way over the line tonight and got exposed for the weak wizard that you are by three first year Hufflepuffs. I shall personally be bringing the matter of your unprovoked attack on the Potters to the school board, either way one of us won't be teaching here next week. Personally my gold's on Hogwarts needing a new potions professor, so get out of my sight before I lose my temper and do something I can assure you I won't regret."

The tumultuous cheering that erupted reminded Pomona that the hall was full of students; she also quickly noticed that while her puffs were cheering along with the claws and lions, it was done with one eye on the Slytherin table. They were only a tiny slip away from this whole situation escalating into a pitched battle, consisting of the other three houses against the Slytherins, when Hedwig made a re-appearance.

The calming effect of her song was instantaneous as she gracefully glided down to Pomona with a small, wrapped parcel in her claws. The head of Hufflepuff accepted the obvious book while Snape sneaked out the hall, Pomona couldn't help but think Hogwarts had just changed forever and she for one couldn't be happier about that.

-oOoOo-

The group appeared in Potter manor to be greeted by a crying Danni, who sprang at Harry as if she hadn't seen him in months. Emma

explained, "She's been crying on and off all day, we tried to tell her you would be home in time for dinner but it didn't help. She just couldn't get over you all leaving on that train, I don't know what we would have done if you three had been gone till Christmas."

Luna chuckled at the toddler wrapped in her husband's arms, "Do you honestly think Harry could have lasted until then without seeing Danni? Even with us there he wouldn't last a week without seeing his baby sister."

Harry just smiled as Danni clung to his neck, "I always wanted a family, now that I've got one nothing or nobody is ever going to keep us apart. Luna's right as usual, I couldn't have lasted a week, splitting up a family in the name of education is just cruel."

Sirius couldn't wait any longer, "If you don't tell us what happened right now then I swear I will release the prank war to end all prank war's down upon you three."

Hermione had her hands on her hips, "Bring it on old man!"

"Oh Hermione, that was a nasty thing to say," quipped Luna, "True maybe but still nasty."

"Sirius, I thought you knew by now not to mess with the Potter Ladies, Snape and Dumbledore discovered that painful lesson for themselves tonight. The old man will be spending the night in the infirmary while Snape might be dangling there still, I didn't see anyone in a hurry to let him down. Your whole plan worked like a dream."

Sirius and Remus were jumping up and down with excitement, ending with them entwining their arms and dancing with each other before grabbing a laughing Maia and Emma to twirl around the floor.

"When you're quite finished," said Cas, "Dinner is served."

"Be there in a moment Cas, Miss Skeeter you can come out now."

A beetle crawled out of Harry's pocket and transformed into the Daily Prophet's top reporter. "Lord Potter that was just awesome, I can't thank you enough for the interview and allowing me to witness that today. We should be able to take pictures using a pensieve and my boss is going to be up all night making sure we print enough copies."

"Your welcome Miss Skeeter, your stories have kept the fight against evil at the forefront of people's minds, I'm just sorry we couldn't do it sooner but you know what happened the last time I gave an interview. The difference now is people will already know about Luna, Hermione and Hedwig, also my location since we will be attending Hogwarts."

Maia handed over a package to the reporter, "Rita, in here is all our documentation on the academic results Harry would have mentioned and a photo I'm rather fond of."

Rita opened the large envelope that guaranteed her fourth Silver Quill award and tomorrow's front page of the Prophet; the picture itself was nothing short of magnificent. It showed Harry with Hermione and Luna either side of him while Hedwig perched on his shoulder, the white phoenix then enveloped the trio in her wings. The photographer had managed to capture a moment where you could see this was children but get a glimpse of the adults they would become, Rita understood why Maia was 'rather fond' of this picture and she would be prepared to bet that the wizarding world would soon be 'rather fond' of it too. Her boss was going to go ape when he saw this and once again the name Rita Skeeter would be known worldwide.

-oOoOo-

A slightly chubby boy with brown hair and dressed in Gryffindor robes was clutching a letter in his hand as he headed for the owlery, he had to get this information to his Gran right away. Neville Longbottom had apparently only thought he hated his potions professor, after Lord Potter's revelations in the great hall the young wizard had a whole new definition of hate for one Severus Snape.

Every single person in that hall couldn't fail to be impressed by the actions the three Potters had taken at the feast but it was the phrase

that Snape had 'pointed He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named at both the Potters and Longbottoms' that was burned into his brain as if placed there by branding iron.

Then there was the beautiful white phoenix to consider, this ensured the authenticity of truth to their actions and words. Neville was aware his Gran hated Dumbledore with a passion; this led the boy to believe she thought the headmaster was somehow involved in what had happened to his parents. The new firsties had quickly informed the rest of Gryffindor what had been said to McGonagall before they entered and Ginny Weasley was practically interrogated by her brothers to find out what she knew, it turned out to be quite a lot.

Neville had written everything down along with a couple of requests for his grandmother, most important was his immediate need for a private potions tutor, there was no way he could be in the same room as Snape now. He also wanted some gold to buy a copy of that book by the Marauders, the Weasley twins thought the authors were the smartest people on the planet so that was good enough for him.

He was so caught up in his thoughts he never even noticed the girl coming down the spiral staircase until he walked right into her. "Oh I'm sorry...Susan?"

Susan Bones was just returning from posting a letter to her Auntie when she literally walked into her friend, both were orphans being raised by powerful women in the ministry. They had met at parties and just sort of gravitated towards each other over the years, they were good friends who could both understand the position they found themselves in of being wards to the Chief Witch and head of the DMLE.

"Hi Neville, I was just letting Auntie know what happened tonight, what a way to start the term."

Neville indicated his own letter, "Was just doing the same for Gran, its got the whole of Gryffindor buzzing so I can't imagine what the reaction is like in Hufflepuff."

Susan actually had to think for a moment on the best way to describe the atmosphere in her house common room, "It's pretty mixed up in there at the moment, we're not used to prominent people being sorted into our house. Some of the girls are already drooling over him, trying to convince themselves that he's not actually with Hermione and Luna, while others are not happy that they're not staying in the castle and showing loyalty to the school. We don't know them at all and are hardly likely to get the opportunity since they're only going to be taking three classes and not even having meals here"

"You can't argue with their reasons though, I'm asking Gran if she can get me a potions tutor, I will be expelled before I set foot in that man's class again. The Weasley's young sister was friends with Luna before the attacks and sat with them on the express. It was no surprise that Malfoy was the one who went after them on the train but Ginny said Luna knocked him out with a punch while Harry and Hermione had their wands in his sidekick's faces. Luna also told her they've been soul bound for three years but never mentioned the white phoenix, who would have believed her anyway before tonight?"

They were interrupted by the Weasley twins and Ginny, also with letters in their hands and heading for the owlery. By the time curfew came Hogwarts wouldn't have a single owl left as excited students wrote home about the momentous events that had taken place.

-oOoOo-

Danni refused to sit in her high chair, spending dinnertime sitting on Harry's knee and eating off his plate as her sisters chatted to the rest of the company, giving detailed accounts of what had happened today. None of the adults present were surprised that they were all placed in Hufflepuff, their devotion to each other probably left no other option.

After dinner Nym left with her parents, promising to floo here in the morning for a 'ride' to Hogwarts and a very happy Remus also left. Their prank working so well seemed to take years of the man, Sirius was great with ideas but it was Remus who was the meticulous planner, he was responsible for those ideas being carried out in the most effective way possible. Today had went better than he could

have dreamed and Harry had promised to show them all his memory at the weekend, Remus couldn't wait, the marauders had made a triumphant return to Hogwarts.

Danni wanted no one but Harry to put her to bed but she also wanted 'Hermi' and 'Lulu' to read her a story, Maia thought she knew what was wrong. "I think our baby here was picking up the feelings of everyone on that platform who knew they weren't going to be seeing each other again until Christmas. Danni thought you weren't coming home and we just couldn't convince her otherwise. She's used to you all going to school but recognised this was very different."

She clung to Harry, "No train, no train?"

He kissed her forehead, "Ok princess, we'll never go on that nasty train again. Hedwig will be taking us from now on and we'll be here for you every night."

The toddler began to relax and fall asleep in his lap before Harry and the girls headed upstairs to put her to bed.

Sirius was fighting back the tears as he watched them leave the room, "That young man is going to make a fantastic father."

Emma took his hand and gave it a squeeze, "You're not so bad yourself, you've been a father to the four of them for the last few years and I think you're doing a great job."

Sirius squeezed her hand back while reaching for Maia's with his free hand, today on that platform had brought a lot of happy memories flooding back, then sitting waiting on the kids, not knowing what was happening had shredded what was left of his composure. Sirius Black was closer to tears tonight than he had been in years. Watching all those proud parents put their children onto that train had nearly made his heart burst as he watched his three board while he held the youngest, and there in lay the problem.

"Emma it would be my greatest wish to be a father to those children, I couldn't love them any more if they were mine. I would love to make it official and take you both as my wives, you must know I love you

both very much and would be honoured if you would make an honest man of me.”

Sirius was trying to control his breathing, just how big an idiot would he appear if he hyperventilated and passed out now, he couldn't believe he'd actually said what's been on his mind for ages and could only pray he hadn't screwed up the best things in his life.

Emma answered first, “The day of the accident I was positive I was meant to die, for a while I couldn't understand why I survived until we discovered I was pregnant. Danielle is not just a gift from Dan but a gift from above as well; I have so much to be thankful for I feel blessed every morning I get out of bed. I do love you Sirius and I love our family but I could never be another man's wife, my husband watches over us every day and, while I'm sure he wouldn't object I'm afraid I do. To me it would feel like cheating on Dan and that's something I could never do. By the time Danni's hitting her teens I'm certain those three will have enough children to keep Granny Emma on her toes. That is the happy life I see before me Sirius and there is definitely a large place for you in it, I'm sorry but just not as my husband.” She kissed his cheek before heading off to see if Danni was sleeping, then go to bed herself.

Sirius and Maia watched her leave before she turned round to give him an answer, “I understand what we have here may seem strange to some but we are all aware it's very, very special. I know we've both been off the dating scene for quite a while but for Merlin's sake Sirius, it's customary to at least have one before asking the woman to marry you.” She squeezed his hand to let him know there was no sting in her words. “I will be honest Sirius, ever since Danni was born I've wanted another child but that child would have to be like Luna, conceived, born and raised in love. I do love you Sirius but I don't know if I'm in love with you, I would also have to talk to Luna and Emma that us being a couple wouldn't interfere with what we have here. It's not a no but it's not a yes, it's a ‘let's try a few dates and take it very slow’ answer.”

Sirius felt as if he'd been passed through a mangle, then ended up in a mincer but Maia saying she wanted a child and even the possibility of him being the father made his heart soar. He was in full agreement

about not disrupting what they had here which is why he could easily accept Maia discussing it with Emma and Luna.

Emma's decision had not surprised him in the least; he always knew there was a better chance of Maia considering his offer. He was trying not to be embarrassed that he'd blurted out his question like some hormonal teenager on a Friday night, trying to get a date for Hogsmead weekend, Sirius would never give up what he had here and no other woman would ever understand the situation enough to be part of it, his choice of a wife was one of these two beautiful women who he already loved. He just wished he'd handled it better.

Sirius was now terrified that he would make a fool of himself but, having come this far, Gryffindors charge ahead, "Would we be moving too fast if I kissed you right now?"

Maia smiled shyly; this was awkward for her to, "Well since I just agreed to go out on a date with you I would think that would be allowed."

"Dinner and dancing, Saturday night?" Maia nodded and Sirius leaned in for a kiss.

Emma watched from the bedroom door as Harry stroked Danni's hair while Luna and Hermione read from 'The Tale of Peter Rabbit', it was a magical scene that filled Emma with wonder and love. Emma thought she was the luckiest woman in the world and that gave her another reason for turning Sirius down, she didn't mention it because even to her it seemed totally irrational. She felt that to accept more than the happiness she already had would be tempting fate and nothing was more important to her than those four in that room, even thinking about it sounded irrational to her but it was something she just couldn't shake off so the decision was an easy one.

-oOoOo-

Pomona Sprout had missed the fabled marauders at Hogwarts, both as a student and professor but had to admit this book was a work of genius. They had somehow tied it into Hogwarts herself to make it self-updating, which would have Filius drooling over the charm work

involved. It wasn't just a list of unpublished rules that the students could exploit but much, much more. In her job Pomona dealt with muggles as their seeds and plantlets were much cheaper for non-magical plants and herbs. She believed the term they used for a system like this was inter-active, you pressed on the Hufflepuff symbol and it told you how many house points they had, awarded by which professor and who had lost them.

This year was still blank but you also had the option of going back a few years and what she saw made her blood boil with anger. The professor section allowed you to choose a specific member of staff, view their points awarded / deducted and see how their OWL and NEWT passes compared to other schools. When she chose Severus Snape the figures confirmed why Slytherin continually won the house cup and also why the Potters had a private potions tutor, his student pass rate was abysmal. Trying to reign in her temper, the head of Hufflepuff headed off to find two of her colleges to coordinate their actions against this failure of a human being.

Severus visited Dumbledore in the infirmary, only to discover that Poppy had already administered a sleeping draft and the old fool wouldn't be available to talk with until the morning. They really needed to close down the owlery to stop this information spreading from Hogwarts but only the headmaster could give that order, he was only hoping that they both could ride this out. That might depend on who actually got to find out exactly what happened but he wasn't too worried, one thing Dumbledore was a master at was twisting the facts to mean whatever he wanted them to.

With Longbottom and Bones still relentlessly perusing his former colleges and putting them in Azkaban he had so far remained above suspicion. The fact that very few death eaters knew what his involvement in the last war actually was and Albus continually vouching for him had kept Severus safe until now.

His illusions of safety would be scattered to the four winds by the Daily Prophet, the whole incident would be front page news and on every breakfast table in Britain's magical community first thing in the morning.

Elsewhere at Hogwarts a certain student decided to write down everything they knew about the Potters, facts, rumours and even hearsay. Raking through their trunk for a bit of parchment they discovered a small black pocket book that looked perfect for the job, it could also be carried everywhere with them allowing it to be updated as information became available. Ink loaded quill in hand they began to write in its pages.

A/N Thanks for reading

Chapter 3

Augusta Longbottom nearly choked on her Earl Grey as she read the note from her grandson, just mentioning Dumbledore's name in her presence was enough to get her gander up but this went way beyond that. The news that his pet death eater might have been involved in her son and daughter-in-laws attack left Augusta wanting to rip the old bastard's vital organs out through his ears.

She was heading to the fireplace to floocall Amelia when her friend's head appeared in the flames; obviously Neville wasn't the only one who wrote home tonight. "Can you believe the Potters finally turn up and the staff end up firing curses at them, we need to get him this time Augusta!"

"I agree Amelia and while my first instinct is to barge right in there first thing tomorrow morning, I think we need to speak to Lord's Potter and Black first. We know what a slippery bastard Dumbledore is but if word of this gets out then I'm sure they'll both lose their jobs, probably Fudge as well for allowing Hogwarts to get in such a state. You may have to throw your hat in the ring for the minister's post Amelia because some of the other candidates would set us back years."

The full implication of the repercussions this could cause began to become clear to the head of the DMLE, "Augusta, you know I don't want that job, that's the only reason we left Fudge where he was. We know he's useless but some of the others who are interested would push all our reforms into the background and fight us at every turn, we need to think about this carefully. I wonder if Lord Potter will actually send us those figures, we could 'accidentally' leak them to the press. Rita Skeeter owes me a favour and she would jump at the chance."

"There's bound to be interest in his return to the wizarding world so perhaps she would tag it on to that, I think we should still go to Hogwarts tomorrow as I need to see Minerva about arranging private potions tuition for Neville. We should be able to talk to the Potters then as well, since we still don't know where they live."

Both women agreed to go with that plan for now; Amelia was going to pull Susan out of Snape's class as well.

-oOoOo-

Arthur Weasley wasn't surprised when an owl delivered a letter from Ginny, what did surprise him though was his wife breaking down sobbing. He was just beginning to think that his only daughter had been sorted into Slytherin when Molly managed to speak, "Little Luna Lovegood is alive, so is her mother." It took a few deep breaths to try and get herself back under control while the news washed over Arthur. "That's not the half of it, Luna and another girl called Hermione are married to Harry Potter, Ginny met them on the express and spent the full journey chatting to them. Turns out they're not boarding at Hogwarts and Albus had a big fight with them over this, he's spending the night in the infirmary because they took his phoenix away from him."

Arthur was puzzled, "Harry Potter's in the infirmary because Albus took his phoenix off him?"

Molly made that aggravating noise that women trying to explain something to their stupid husbands have patented since time began, the fact she was doing a piss poor job of the explaining had nothing to do with it. "Why don't you listen Arthur, Albus is in the hospital because the Potters took his phoenix, Fawkes, away from him. Turns out the Potters have their own phoenix, its pure white and named Hedwig."

"Are you sure this isn't a prank from the twins? A white phoenix?"

"Yes love, a white phoenix, and there is a note here from the twins. Turns out the Potters have invited them and Ginny to spend the weekend at the Potter house, apparently all we have to do is sign this permission slip and it's all above board."

Arthur shook his head, "We're being set up by the twins here, think about it love. Twelve-year-old Harry Potter turns up at Hogwarts with

two wives, one of whom has been dead for three years, and a white phoenix! He then puts Albus in the infirmary and asks three of our children to spend the weekend with them, this has Fred and George written all over it.”

“Normally I would agree with you except for one thing, saying Luna was alive if she wasn’t would be unbelievably cruel. They may be the biggest makers of mischief in the country but one thing they’re not is cruel. I’m going to floo Minerva to find out what’s going on here and if this is genuine. Spending a weekend with Harry Potter would be a dream come true for Ginny, even if he is married to the best friend she thought was dead.”

Molly headed towards the fireplace while Arthur wondered if that last sentence would make more sense if he had a couple of fire-whiskies inside him, probably not but at least he wouldn’t then be puzzling over it all night.

-oOoOo-

It wasn’t fire-whisky but twelve-year-old malt that was in Minerva’s glass, Pomona and Filius also had glasses of the amber nectar held in their hands. Pomona’s prediction of Filius’s reaction to the book was spot on. He really was drooling over the charm work necessary to make it function as it did, reviewing those impressive functions though provided the same reaction as his two compatriots in the office, Filius was raging and barely containing his anger.

Their whole house system was being turned into a mockery, due to the actions of the head of Slytherin, his blatant bias for his own house meant that none of the other three ever had a chance of winning Hogwarts ultimate prize, the house cup. To make matters worse Dumbledore must have known about it and had done nothing to curb this travesty. The whole of Slytherin must have thought it was some great joke to win the cup every year by cheating, while their students worked hard to earn points, Snape casually removed them for nonsensical misdemeanours like ‘blinking too loud’.

They had decided to ask for an emergency school board meeting where they were going to make their complaints known, either the board did something about it or they would be looking for three new heads of house, they could no longer work under these conditions.

The trio were interrupted by the head of Molly Weasley appearing in the fireplace, "Excuse me Minerva, I can see you're busy but it's just that I received this really weird note from the kids."

Pomona actually chuckled, "Molly it's been a really weird night, if the note mentions Lord Potter then it's probably all true. I don't think you need to be Sybil to predict that Hufflepuff will never be the same after tonight, Hogwarts won't be the same after tonight."

"I have a permission slip here for you Minerva, I'm not sure what's going on yet but I'd rather hand this to you than let the twins get a hold of it. Do you know where the Potters live or who stays with them?"

Minerva let her frustration show, "They refused to give their address, the best that we can come up with is that both girl's mothers stay with them and possibly Lord Black. The white phoenix kind of says everything that's needed about their character, it's bonded to all three of them."

"I've never seen anything like it," Filius actually began chuckling before continuing, "No one has ever seen anything like it, I'll bet Albus is wishing he'd just let them go instead of trying to kidnap them. He got his arse well and truly kicked and will probably lose his job over it. At least he will if I have anything to do with it!" the conviction in his voice surprised the three women and Molly bade them goodnight as she rushed to fill Arthur in on the latest news. She'd forgotten to ask Minerva if she knew why Ron wasn't on the list for staying with the Potters since he was the same age as Harry.

-oOoOo-

Harry was currently lying in bed with both his wives snuggling into him as he ran his fingers through their long hair; it had become a

relaxing night time ritual for the three of them. “I just remembered Harry, we forgot to mention that I had invited people to stay for the weekend, I hope they don’t mind.”

Hermione had a thought that made her laugh, “Cas will probably get Dobby to set up rooms for them, anything to keep him out of her hair. I sometimes wonder if the Malfoys gave him to you on purpose Luna, do you think they were glad to see the back of the weird little guy?”

Luna huffed, “There’s nothing wrong with Dobby, he’s just enthusiastic and a bit ... eccentric.”

With that word all teasing stopped as both pulled the blond Mrs Potter into a tight embrace, Harry kissed her on the forehead, “Your dad and Dobby would have got on famously, I can just see them competing to see who could wear the most outlandish clothes.”

“I still think your dad would win though,” chipped in Hermione as Luna’s melancholy was replaced by a smile, they knew each other so well now that moments like that were short lived. It was hard to be sad when you had two wonderful people who loved you.

Hedwig gave a gentle song to Fawkes, who was nestled up in an open box. Even with Hedwig’s assistance, breaking his familiar bond had taken its toll on the phoenix, it would be a few days yet before he recovered.

Another night time ritual for the Potters was the goodnight kiss, this had started off innocently enough when they were younger. As they got older it began to mean more and more, all three had the talk from their family and had no intention of doing anything other than kissing but it felt nicer all the time. Luna went first tonight as she needed cheering up a bit, she then cuddled into her husband as he kissed Hermione before the three of them settled down for the night, watched over as always by the white phoenix.

-oOoOo-

White Phoenix Trio Hit Hogwarts

Under this banner headline was the iconic photo with their names overlaid, Luna Potter, Harry Potter, Hermione Potter and even Hedwig got to see her name in print.

Had they stopped there the Prophet would still have sold every copy they could print but the bold letters stating 'Potters Attacked by Hogwarts Staff' guaranteed overtime for the printing presses. Rita wasn't pulling any punches as she tried to deliver a knock out blow to Dumbledore.

As the new first year were undergoing their sorting in Hogwarts yesterday a momentous occurrence was witnessed by all, Lord Harry Potter sat on the stool to discover his house. The sorting was then delayed while the hat called for his bond mate's so they could be sorted together. Lady Luna Potter nee Lovegood and Lady Hermione Potter nee Granger were eventually sorted with their husband into Hufflepuff.

The excitement was far from over thought as a string of startling revelations led to a violent confrontation between some staff and the Potters in the main hall, again witnessed by everyone present.

Lord Potter claimed that not only did the lady that Dumbledore had observing his childhood know he was being mistreated, whenever possible she would slip him food and treat his injuries. I quote "I just don't believe that lovely woman would not report what she saw, her many cats lived a better life than I did."

Lady Luna Potter claimed Dumbledore had visited her mother at their former house just moments before it blew up, she politely asked him if he had seen who cast the dark mark above their home. Naturally there was no answer from Dumbledore.

It was the Potters decision to take only three classes at Hogwarts and attend part time that really kicked-off the ruckus, their reason that these were the only courses worth taking caused major indignation amongst some of the staff.

It was Lord Potter's belief that Professor Snape was a terrible teacher and also played a part in having You-Know-Who targeting not only

his own parents, but the Longbottoms as well that saw this supposed educator draw his wand and fire a curse at three children.

The three new first years deal with the threat admirably; the head of Slytherin was disarmed and incapacitated with consummate ease by these confident Hufflepuffs. Snape was left hanging in the air like a side of beef on a butcher's hook, displaying his questionable choice in undergarments for all to see.

Did the wizard charged with the children's safety spring to their aid? Was Severus Snape sacked for firing a curse at three children? Albus Dumbledore proceeded to lock the doors and forbid the Potters from leaving until he's had a 'private chat' with them in his office, Lord Potter wisely declined this questionable invitation and challenged the old fool to a duel.

The honour duel by phoenix was magnificent, if somewhat short lived, as Fawkes didn't seem to think there was any Dumbledore honour worth defending. In a conversation between the creatures of light, a conversation that all the Potters could follow, it emerged that Dumbledore had used spells and rituals to bind the phoenix to him. This appeared unacceptable to Hedwig who turned the magical bird to ash and broke the bond with Dumbledore, Fawkes left gently cradled in the hands of Lady Luna Potter while the 'leader of the light' was left receiving medical attention.

The Potters are three incredibly powerful witches and wizard with a fabled white phoenix as a willingly bonded companion yet the reception they received on their first day back in the magical world saw them treated like criminals.

I was very fortunate to be granted an interview with them which, due to the events that transpired at Hogwarts will now be published tomorrow. What I can reveal here is that all three currently attend Muggle School and have no intention of giving that up. They are clearly at home in that world and certain sections of our society seem hell bent on making them choose to stay there. With the advantage of meeting and getting to know them I can honestly say our society would be the poorer if this happened.

Their claims that Hogwarts is nowhere near the best magical school in the world are supported by documents detailing the pass marks of Hogwarts students compared to other magical education establishments; it's not pleasant reading if your children currently attend Hogwarts. With Muggle Studies and the History of Magic courses being so poor, their OWL's and NEWT's are not even recognised outside the UK. With Hogwarts Potions passes being the worst in over twenty listed countries we have to wonder what other skills Snape brings to Hogwarts, he's certainly not there for his pleasant personality, amusing wit or his charming way with children.

When the minister of magic, Cornelius Fudge, was asked if he could confirm the Hogwarts figures that Lord Potter had provided us with, he attempted to block our publication of them. Citing that Hogwarts academic performance was 'nobody's business' led us to put our faith in the figures, rather than the ministry so we published the total passes here. Lord Potter confirmed that in the muggle world this is common practice with their schools, allowing parents to make an educated choice of which school their children should attend.

In our society it would appear that parents are expected to pay good gold for a poor education without asking any questions on the way their children are taught. We at the Daily Prophet encourage our readers to demand what is rightfully theirs, a say in their children's education. They are after all our most precious resource and the future of our world, some of our educators and politicians would do well to remember that.

Tomorrow: Another World Exclusive by Rita Skeeter - At home with the Potters! An interview not to be missed.

Albus Dumbledore threw his newspaper away in disgust, just as Snape was entering with his own copy clutched in his hand. "I want to render that little shit down to potions ingredients, slowly and painfully. This article makes me look like a useless arsehole."

Albus wondered what part of the article Severus thought was inaccurate, personally he thought Miss Skeeter had all her facts spot on, he just wondered how she got them.

“Severus I can’t advise you strongly enough to stay away from the Potters, apart from the fact they easily took care of your attack last night, Amelia Bones would be all over you like a rash. That is assuming that Pomona didn’t get to you first, she will take any attack on her students personally and that is one woman you don’t want to mess with. They are not in your house nor are they taking potions, you have no reason to have contact with them so don’t.”

Severus was like a spoilt child denied his new favourite toy, “But Albus, they’ve left me unable to show my face in the great hall...”

His whinging was interrupted by Poppy, “If that means we never have to see that underwear again, then I for one am all in favour. Perhaps you could explain to me professor Snape why you are in my ward, disturbing my patient without permission?”

“I needed to speak to the headmaster.”

“At this moment in time he is not the headmaster but my patient, you are disturbing my patient and I will not have it – OUT!” If it was up to Poppy the man would be thrown out of more than her infirmary.

Snape’s only consolation was that at least the whole of Hogwarts didn’t witness his second humiliating defeat in the space of twenty-four hours, he should have realised there was still plenty of time left today.

-oOoOo-

Augusta and Amelia entered a highly charged Hogwarts great hall, every copy of the prophet had at least half-a-dozen students trying to read it at the same time. Both quickly noticed that neither Dumbledore nor Snape were sitting at the top table as they headed for Minerva, “Good morning ladies, I can’t say I’m surprised to see you here though I had imagined you accompanied by a team of aurors.”

“This is purely a fact finding visit Minerva, and to discuss some private potions lessons for my grandson. Neville won’t be going

anywhere near that man until we can investigate these allegations, is Lord Potter here yet?”

“Not yet Augusta though we are expecting them anytime.”

Right on cue Hedwig flamed the four Hufflepuffs into the hall, as three of them sat at the Hufflepuff table, Hermione approached the staff table with a carrier bag but went directly to professor Sinistra. “Professor please don’t let the fact we’re not taking your classes lead you to believe we think you’re anything other than a brilliant teacher, it’s just that non-magical astronomy is decades ahead of their magical counterpart”

Aurora opened the bag to find astronomy books that took her breath away, here were colour photographs that confirmed / refuted ideas that magical astronomers had argued over for centuries. No wonder these kids didn’t want to take her class, compared to this the magical world was still in the dark ages. “Lady Hermione I can’t accept these, this is a priceless piece of publishing.”

Hermione actually giggled, “Professor those books are readily available in any half-decent non-magical bookshop for less than the cost of the current defence professor’s works of fiction, any competent muggle studies professor should have known that.”

Amelia had manage to drag her eyes off the white phoenix long enough to witness two useless professors insulted with the one comment, oh she liked these people.

The Muggle Studies professor was not amused, these remarks, combined with the article in the Prophet had his career hanging by a thread. “Lady Potter I’ll have you know I’m well versed on muggle culture and resent your implications made in this hall, and in the press.”

Hermione asked sweetly, “In your opinion professor what would you say was the most influential event to take place in the non-magical world in, say the last century?”

This was straight out of his coursework so he didn't hesitate, "The invention of the horseless carriage."

"The internal combustion engine has played a huge part in the development of our culture, my mother is even teaching Nym to drive. You could also make a good case for instant worldwide communication or the phenomenal growth of computers. Personally I would say it was the American Neil Armstrong being the first man to walk on the moon in 1969."

Aurora Sinistra watched her colleague squirm as it was clear to everyone he didn't have a clue what Hermione was talking about, she couldn't believe her ears though at the last comment, "You mean to tell me that men actually visited the Moon over twenty years ago and we're just finding out about it now?"

"Oh no professor, they beamed live pictures back for the whole world to watch. They now land robots on Mars to carry out experiments and send back pictures and data. We have our own observatory on the roof at home, as we're all very interested in Astronomy, you're welcome to visit anytime you're free."

Aurora was not about to turn down that incredible offer, "Rest assured Lady Hermione, I will be getting back to you at the first opportunity."

Gilderoy was still sitting there seething, his ego couldn't take any more hits so he just had to respond to the earlier comment. "I'm sorry miss but I resent your accusation that my books contain anything other than the truth, of course I could hardly expect a little girl to understand about these things."

Harry had made his mind up before coming here today that they were taking no shit of anyone, especially this fraud, he stood up. "That 'little girl' has an IQ that you could only dream of and is perfectly capable of kicking your arse all over this hall but I'm going to make you a one time offer. In your novel 'Wandering with Werewolves' you claim to wrestle with one before casting a spell to reverse the transformation. We have a friend who is a werewolf and I will pay you one million galleons for a working spell that can achieve this."

The hall had went so quiet you could have heard a ghost fart, Harry Potter had well and truly thrown down the gauntlet, it was time for Lockheart to put up or shut up. The silence was eventually broken by Luna, "I think you should take our offer before the Hogwarts defence curse kicks in after you have taken your first class today."

Gilderoy felt the cold hand of fear grip him by the gonads, he managed to stutter, "What curse?"

Luna's smile was anything but reassuring, "Oh Voldemort cursed the position and nobody has lasted more than a year in the job." Gilderoy was just thinking that wasn't too bad when the little blond delivered the coup de grace, "Of course the professor last year didn't last anywhere near that long before meeting his untimely death."

Gilderoy Lockheart's only ambition now was to get out of here with as much of his dignity intact as possible; there was never any chance of him claiming the million galleon prize. The wizard who carried out the deed had actually killed the werewolf; he just thought it read better if he cured the savage beast. "Professor McGonagall it would appear that all the facts were not presented to me when I was offered this position, while I would love to stay and break this curse for you, I don't think that dishonesty should be rewarded so I'm resigning forthwith. Lord Potter, while your offer is tempting, I swore on my honour I would keep that spell a secret and never use it again, I must therefore decline your generous proposal."

Harry bowed to the ponce, "I expected nothing less from a man such as yourself, that's why I'm sure you will be offering full refunds to everyone here who purchased the required defence books for a course you no longer feel able to teach. An honourable wizard such as yourself could do no less."

Gilderoy was trapped with no avenue of escape, the Chief Witch and head of the DMLE were standing watching him with amusement playing behind their carefully cultured neutral expressions. "Of course I will offer full refunds and it pleases me greatly to find you have such a high opinion of me Lord Potter."

“I’m a Hufflepuff sir, I value honesty, honour and hard work above all else. How could I fail to think any less of you?”

Pomona couldn’t hold her laugh in any longer, the great Gilderoy Lockheart had just been ‘badgered’ into resigning his job, practically admitting his books were fiction and forced into refunding the students money for the useless novels they were forced to buy. Pomona’s laughter was the catalyst that set everyone else off and Gilderoy discovered just how hard it was to walk out of a room with dignity while an entire hall laughed at you.

The Muggle Studies professor decided the wisest course of action was to cut his loses now, he stood, “Professor McGonagall I believe my position in this establishment has become un-tenable, it is therefore with deep regret I tender my resignation, effective immediately.”

The part of Minerva that was an educator cheered as the chaff was sorted from the wheat but the part of her that knew the school still had to function wished it could be done a different way.

“Lord Potter, will I be able to finish my breakfast or are you planning on removing me as well?”

“Oh no Professor, you’re rated as one of the top transfiguration teachers in the world and come highly recommended, I’m looking forward to your classes.”

Minerva tried to retain her stern exterior as she answered, “I’m really pleased and somewhat relieved to hear that.”

Harry continued, “I would have no idea how to embarrass a ghost enough to make it quit teaching but I can’t help but wonder what happens to Professor Binns salary though.”

Minerva went to answer only to discover no words came out her mouth, she hadn’t a clue what happened to that gold but would be making it her business to find out

“Lord Potter, might I have a word? I’m Amelia Bones and this is Augusta Longbottom.”

Harry gave a polite bow, “I know who you are Ma’am and it’s a pleasure to meet you both, if you don’t mind could we wait to see our timetable before reaching any decisions as I don’t want our chat to be here.”

Hermione received their timetables as they conferred over their bond, “It would appear we have no classes today so if you both would like to accompany us, we could go somewhere more private for our chat. I would like to extend an invitation to Neville and Susan to spend the weekend with us and also see about being tutored in potions as well. If a certain meddling old man hadn’t stuck his nose in we would have been raised together, or at the very least friends, I would like to offer the hand of friendship now.” Both Susan and Neville were eagerly nodding to their guardians as McGonagall interrupted.

“Lord Potter, would your potions tutor be interested in assisting at Hogwarts, should the need arise?”

The hall was suddenly faced with a very different Harry Potter, “The murderer of her husband has a son attending here, the same son who tried to accost Luna on the train yesterday and later had to be stopped by another student from cursing us from behind. Our prime suspect for her attempted murder and the total destruction of her home is the current headmaster of this facility, Potions Mistress Maia Lovegood will not be setting one foot in this castle whilst those two remain at large.” The power radiated off Harry as both his girls took their positions by his side, ready for anything.

Anything turned out to be something completely different as four members of the school board came barrelling into the great hall in an agitated state, with copies of this morning’s Prophet in their hands.

Nigel Lawson was a pureblood traditionalist who hated having his daily routine disturbed, today’s Prophet had already given him indigestion and thrown all his plans for today down the crapper. “Minerva what in Merlin’s name is going on, after reading this rubbish

in the Prophet we headed straight here. I've just met two professors who were leaving Hogwarts, one has yet to even teach a class. Where is Dumbledore and why doesn't he have this Potter brat under control?"

Harry stepped forward, "The old man already had his shot at controlling the Potter brat, he spent the night in the infirmary. Would you like to have a go at the brat or are you all mouth?"

"Why you impudent young upstart, I've a good mind to demand satisfaction right now."

Harry's wand was in his hand with a silent Expelliarmus leaving it before his opponent could even blink, the spell was so powerful it blasted the wizard off his feet and into the other board members. While they were all lying there in a heap, Hermione had casually snatched the wand out of the air. She was just about to snap it when a suggestion over their bond from Luna stayed her hand.

Harry's wand disappeared back up his sleeve, "Well I don't know about him but I'm satisfied, and yes Professor McGonagall we do have private tutoring in defence. No Professor McGonagall they are not available to teach at Hogwarts, ladies, shall we get out of here?"

Hermione handed the wand to Amelia while Luna spoke to the professors, "Professor Sprout, we are delighted our first lesson will be with you tomorrow morning, followed by transfiguration. Professor Flitwick we will see you on Friday sir."

Amelia and Augusta joined the trio as Hedwig flamed them out of a once again stunned great hall.

After some assistance, Nigel was once again on his feet, "Minerva I demand the expulsion of that boy, an unprovoked attack in the great hall cannot be allowed to go unpunished."

Pomona was up like a shot, "Is that a new rule that only applies if your surname is Potter? Last night we had a head of house attack three students in this hall yet that seems to be acceptable. The headmaster refuses to acknowledge the school rules because it

doesn't suit his particular needs yet that also seems acceptable. You barged in here unannounced, called the Lord of a Noble and Ancient family a brat, threatened to call him out and then get upset when he bested you? Let me tell you sir, three members of my house being victimised is not acceptable to me and should you proceed with this action then I will also be walking out of here this morning without teaching a class."

Her peripheral vision caught sight of Minerva and Filius both standing and declaring their intentions to support her decision before they were joined by every member of staff present. Not to be outdone the Hufflepuff table stood en masse, quickly joined by most of the Gryffindors and well over half of the Ravenclaws.

Faced with such unity Nigel had no option, "Very well I withdraw my complaint, where is my wand?"

Pomona tried not to smirk but it was extremely difficult, "Lady Hermione handed it to Madam Bones, I'm sure she will see you get it back. You may not have noticed but Madam Longbottom was present as well so I would advise you to act quickly and responsibly, they were only gathering facts this morning but I can practically guarantee they will be back. This will not be swept under the carpet as per usual since the wizarding world is watching very closely how this is handled, most of them are either former students or have children attending here."

Nigel Lawson could only nod as he led the other members out the hall, they would suspend Dumbledore and Snape for now and see how the land lay. Should any ministry investigation find the pair guilty of any crimes their swift actions would be applauded, should they be innocent then they both could return to work. The purebloods might not know the saying but they were avid practitioners of 'covering their arses'.

Pomona looked towards her badgers and saw her entire house were sitting just that little bit straighter, heads held just a fraction higher and she'd never been prouder to be a Hufflepuff than she was right now.

-oOoOo-

Their arrival at Potter manor was greeted by a shout of 'Harry!' as a toddler headed towards them at breakneck speed, like any toddler though Danni was still learning to run. When her upper body was trying to get there faster than her little legs could carry her, she seemed certain to crash to the ground. Unlike most toddlers though Danni had three powerful magic users as siblings, Harry held out his hands and Danni floated right into them.

"Hey Princess, told you we would be back," Harry was hoisting her onto his shoulders as Emma chased in after her youngest.

"Mum, this is Madam Bones and Madam Longbottom from the ministry, we invited them here for tea and a chat, this is my mum, Emma Granger. Could you ask Cas to prepare some tea while we change out of these robes?" The three teens headed up the stairs with Danni still on Harry's shoulders.

"Is Maia Lovegood and Lord Black available?" asked Amelia.

"Maia is in the greenhouses while Lord Black has just popped out to make a restaurant reservation, can I ask what this 'chat' is about?"

"We're hoping that we can get enough information to finally pin something on Albus Dumbledore."

With Amelia's mention of that name, Emma's whole demeanour changed, "I'd like to pin him to a wall and let me and Maia work on him for what happened to our boy."

Augusta put her arm around the now very angry woman, "Emma, I think you and I are going to get along famously, as long as you add me to that group to work on the old git."

Amelia could only smile and think her first impression was correct, she really liked these people.

A/N I was unsure if I should continue Fate's Gambit but your response to FG2 has convinced me I made the correct decision. I'm very remiss at answering reviews, preferring to forge ahead with the writing and maintain my weekly schedule, but I can assure you I read every one. My method of writing means that when I post a chapter I don't have one word of the next typed and only a vague idea in my head what's going to be in it. Quite often points raised in reviews have seen me alter my intended outcome so a big thank you for everyone who has taken the trouble to review. Finally, and most importantly – Thanks for reading.

Chapter 4

The twins had spent the last evening regaling their friends with stories they had unearthed of the marauders, even showing Lee, Angelina, Alicia and Katie the map. Their main worry was not having any gold to buy the book that Harry said would soon be on sale, the same boy had just answered their prayers at breakfast with a promised refund for their Lockhart rubbish. Even heading down to Potions could not spoil their good mood but when they got there it felt like Christmas had come early.

They were sharing the class with the Hufflepuffs and neither group could hide their smiles at the shouting coming out of the potions lab, the door may be closed but at least one of the voices was instantly recognisable.

“You can’t suspend me, I won’t stand for it! I’m going to see Albus and get this sorted out, he’ll soon show you who runs Hogwarts.”

“By all means go and see Albus but he already knows who runs Hogwarts, we suspended him before coming down to see you.”

“This is an outrage, Prince Potter shows up and the whole school can’t wait to fall down and worship at his feet, well I for one won’t be.”

“That’s right Snape you won’t be, and you won’t be firing any more curses at them either. Are you so stupid you didn’t realise there would be consequences for your actions or does your arrogance tell you that you’re above such petty things as laws.”

“I am one of the foremost potion masters in the country, these children are lucky to have me.”

“Not according to the figures published in today’s Prophet.”

“Well what do you expect with the dunderheads I have to work with?”

“Since those same ‘dunderheads’ excel in Charms, Transfiguration, Herbology, Runes and Arithmancy we expect your results to match those of properly taught courses. No one is disputing your expertise at brewing potions but it’s your inability to pass this knowledge on that has us standing here. There is an emergency school board meeting being called for Monday where we will be investigating quite a number of things, until then you are suspended from teaching.”

Since this was now Wednesday the board were hoping that by Monday the issues would be solved, thus saving them the trouble of acting.

Snape tried to glare at the group of students who should have been his first class of the new term but this was hard to do convincingly as he was ‘hingin the pettit lip’ and looked ready to burst into tears of frustration at any moment. The students at least had the good grace to wait until he was passed them before bursting into laughter, the raucous sounds of merriment echoed strangely off the dungeon walls as Snape swept away like a poor man’s Darth Vader towards his master.

The class was dismissed and told to return to the great hall to use this as a study period, the twins led the way and their skipping antics were soon picked up by the rest of the delighted students as they made their way along the winding corridors of Hogwarts.

Severus burst into the infirmary to find Poppy’s wand was swiftly in his face, “I thought I told you to get out of here?”

“It is imperative that I speak to Albus for a few moments.” Poppy looked over at her patient and saw that this was necessary, but that didn’t mean she had to like it.

“You’ve got five minutes, upset my patient and I’ll throw you out on your ear.”

He approached the bed where Albus was still looking haggard, “Is it true, have they suspended you as well?”

“Severus I fear I will not be able to assist you in this matter, I’m not even sure if I’ll be able to hang onto my own job. The only advice I can give you is to keep a low profile and stay well away from the Potters, another incident now would almost certainly see us both thrown out of Hogwarts.”

“But Albus...”

“I have given you the best advice I have available, the choice as always is yours to make. Please leave now Severus as I really am in need of my rest.” He couldn’t help but think Albus had never looked so frail in all the time he’d known the great wizard.

[‘hingin the pettit lip’ is a Scot’s saying for a grumpy expression accompanied by a protruding lower lip, usually seen on children who don’t get their own way and as a precursor to floods of tears. I just thought this expression fitted Snape perfectly.]

-oOoOo-

The three Potters returned with the littlest Granger still on her favourite mode of transport, Harry’s shoulders, to find Emma chatting away to the two most powerful women in the British magical community as if they were neighbours who just popped in to borrow something.

Cas supplied them all with juice and this time Danni didn’t resist being sat in her high chair, both wizarding ladies took note of the trio’s preferred attire, jeans, t-shirts and trainers was about as muggle as you could get.

“Lord Potter, Maia will be a few minutes yet but could you explain some of your comments that have been reported in today’s Prophet, especially relating to Dumbledore and Snape.”

“Madam Bones, here in my house it’s always just Harry, I tend to only use my title to remind people that they can’t treat me like a kid.

Of course at home that's just what we are, Maia, Emma and Sirius make sure we don't forget it."

"Oh so we don't even rate a mention now? Hello Augusta, I hope Harry remembered to ask your grandson to spend the weekend as we're looking forward to meeting him."

Both witches span round to see Martha being joined by Jonathon in a picture frame, "Martha Potter, it's so good to see you again, and you too Jonathon. This begins to make sense now as it was obvious they had to be receiving guidance from someone."

Jonathon chuckled, "Augusta we're just part of the team, Emma here is as sharp as a tack and Maia is certainly no slouch either. Sirius and Remus are amongst the most devious people I've ever met so with Cas and Hedwig supporting them these three have had quite the last few years."

"Jonathon it was Harry's comment that Snape set our grandson's up for special attention from that evil murdering swine that really focused my attention, what can you tell me about it?"

Jonathon appeared quite happy to speak for the group; "Bellatrix Lestrange is Sirius's cousin and used to constantly taunt him that while he was rotting in Azkaban, Snape the spy was living the high life at Hogwarts. There was apparently a prophecy made that the one who could defeat the dark lord would be born at the end of July to parents that had denied him three times, only two children fitted that profile. Snape apparently heard this and, after telling his master, was promptly sent to Dumbledore to be his real master's spy. This was the reason behind our children being attacked and why they are not here with us now."

If the fire in Augusta Lonbottom's eyes was any indication then Severus Snape's life expectancy had just taken a serious downturn, Amelia took up the conversation to give her friend a chance to recover. "If there was a prophecy made then it will be stored in the hall of prophecies at the ministry, Harry could go and collect it anytime."

“I already have, Sirius took me there as a visitor ages ago and I left with the glass ball in my pocket.”

Both witches waited on him saying more but it was Amelia that broke first, “I’ll understand if you don’t want to tell us what it said but we could be of great help to you with this matter.”

Harry shook his head, “Oh no it’s nothing like that, we held a discussion and decided we didn’t believe in this prophecy rubbish, I only removed it to stop anyone else getting their hands on it.”

“Do you have it somewhere safe?” Augusta asked.

“It’s at the bottom of an old well we found, we threw it in and watched it smash, some mist came out and may have said something but it was so deep we couldn’t hear a word.”

Amelia was beyond stunned but still managed to stutter, “Do you mean you destroyed it without even listening to the prophecy?”

“In a word, Yes! That prophecy was nobody’s business but mine; I don’t believe in them therefore I had no problems with destroying it. I will not have any more people being killed or injured over a little glass ball, it’s gone and I’m glad I did it.”

The auror in Amelia was having a hard time understanding why someone would destroy information that could actually help them, “Even though you don’t believe in them, surely it would have been more prudent for you, or at least someone close to you to have listened to it first.”

Harry was shaking his head in disagreement but it was Emma who answered for them, “Had we listened to the prophesy it would have undoubtedly changed our lives, since we all like the way our lives are we decided that any information gained would in no way make up for the loss. We face each situation as it arises while training for the worst, the kids have been taking lessons for three years with Sirius,

Remus and Maia saying they're approaching OWL level in some of their subjects."

The two witches from the ministry were looking at the trio even more strangely now as Emma continued, "They want to continue their education in the non-magical world and are only at Hogwarts to meet some of their peers, we have no intention of them missing out on the magical world or abandoning their roots in the non-magical world."

Augusta seemed to take exception to this, "The Lovegoods don't have 'muggle roots' and these three have already missed out on a year's education at Hogwarts."

Luna replied before anyone else got the chance, "My bond mates are a muggle born and a muggle raised, that seems like pretty strong roots to me. I've spent the last three years attending Muggle School while receiving a magical education at home; I was very happy with that set-up and am really looking forward to returning to our Muggle School on Monday. I was probably the loudest voice against attending Hogwarts as we have lots of friends there and even flew in an aeroplane last year as part of a five day school excursion to France; our first day at Hogwarts wasn't great and our second not much better. We have lessons Thursday and Friday with people coming to the house for the weekend but if things don't improve soon, I for one will be voting we leave Hogwarts altogether."

Augusta was outraged at the attitude of this pureblood witch, "But you would be denying your heritage."

Maia caught the end of the argument as she walked in the room, "And just what is that heritage Madam Longbottom? A father who was murdered in his own office by a member of the Wizengamot, her mother nearly meeting the same fate in their own home at the hands of Albus Dumbledore. A godfather who was thrown in prison without a trial and a husband who had both his parents murdered before being illegally placed in an environment where he was so badly beaten he almost died. Yes Madam Chief Witch that's quite the heritage there wouldn't you say? Our children don't live in the past but for today, they don't look back only forward to a long and happy life together. It's our job as parents to see that's what they get and rest assured we

will use every means at our disposal to see that they do. I really don't appreciate you sitting in our house passing judgements when you haven't a clue what you're talking about."

This was not going the way both ministry officials had imagined, Amelia tried to pour some oil on troubled waters. "Perhaps you could explain the situation to us so we can understand your point of view, and also why you chose to let everyone think you were dead for three years."

Maia was on a roll; she hadn't been keen on sending the kids to Hogwarts in the first place but agreed to give the plan a try. The fact that Hedwig could get them out of there in a flash was the only reason she allowed the trio to get on that train. "That old man breezed right through our wards straight into our living room in his search for Harry, we now know he ordered his phoenix to take him there, so you tell me where would I have been safe. I am positive it was him that destroyed our home but didn't see any spells cast and only Hedwig's timely arrival saved my life. I also noticed you didn't use truth serum when you questioned him so figured that would be no help either. Emma and I both lost our husbands on the same day and she was badly injured, by the time we had dealt with that our only concern was the safety of the children, neither death eaters or Dumbledore would be looking for me if they thought I was dead and they had no idea who Emma was."

Amelia and Augusta couldn't fail to see the logic of this argument; both would have done the same if Neville or Susan's lives had been endangered.

"We have watched while you both have tried to chip away at the bigotry and injustice of the British magical world and, while you have our support we are not here to fight anyone's battles for them. One of the main reasons for destroying that prophecy was to prevent anyone trying to pin any more stupid labels onto Harry, the prophesised child or chosen one spring to mind as being ridiculous enough. Yes we have publicly attacked Dumbledore and Snape but that is to get them away from our children, though I would personally like to see both of them die painful deaths, if they are still at Hogwarts next week the Potters won't be."

Augusta was battling to hold her temper, “They strolled into Hogwarts a year late, cause major disruptions that leave the school short staffed and then you’re going to withdraw the children if you don’t get your own way?”

Maia took her aggression down a couple of notches, “We really are trying to help you here, can you both imagine the effect on the British magical community if today’s Prophet had a front page picture of the Potters starting Beauxbatons Academy of Magic, citing Hogwarts terrible academic record while pointing the finger at Dumbledore and Snape’s transgressions? There would have been mayhem and yes, some of the worst professors at Hogwarts may have resigned but we also gave you the means to rectify the problem.”

Both Amelia and Augusta had gasped in horror at the thought of the Potters publicly snubbing Hogwarts for a school abroad, especially their public justification for doing so; there would have been a massive outcry that would have demanded heads to roll. Amelia though was confused at where she’d missed the answer to the Hogwarts teaching problem until Emma pointed it out to them.

“The figures we gave you shows quite clearly the best teachers of any given subject, you need a new potions or defence teacher just look at who has the best record and go after them.”

Augusta couldn’t believe it was that simple, “Won’t they already have jobs teaching their subjects?”

Emma just gave them a smile that said she thought they were being naive, “You make them a better offer, whether it’s salary, conditions, the ability to teach the course the way they want. It happens in the muggle world all the time and is called ‘head hunting’, you want Hogwarts to be the best then this is how you do it.”

Augusta couldn’t fail to notice the kids had been unusually quiet during this discussion; this did not match the impression of Harry she had been building in her mind. “So what do you think of this Harry, you are after all Lord Potter, head of an Ancient and Noble family.”

“I may be head but that doesn’t mean no one else has a voice, as to Hogwarts that was a joint decision. Luna didn’t want to go, Hermione was desperate to give magical school a chance but was leaning towards France. I wanted to at least give my parent’s old school a try before moving our entire family to the continent, we have a château in the south of France that could be our new home by the end of next week. So far we have been well prepared for everything that Hogwarts has thrown at us because we had the element of surprise heavily in our favour. We weren’t expected at Hogwarts this year and Snape just saw three new Hufflepuff first years. He probably hasn’t had anyone fire a curse back at him in ages and no idea we have been practicing duelling for a few years now, the headmaster is so conceited he would never even consider the possibility that anyone other than him could have a phoenix companion. So far we have been underestimated and incredibly lucky but we know this can’t last, we can deal with other students wanting to have a pop at us but not staff. We’re relying on others to remove those threats for us and I have to say I’m not happy about putting my girls at risk so the clock is ticking.”

Amelia felt the whole morning was slipping away from them and tried to get back onto some familiar ground, “You are aware that there are restrictions on the use of magic while underage?”

Harry wore an unnerving grin, “You are of course referring to the British rules on this subject, and I never said we were practicing in Britain. I would also like to point out that as we three are married, therefore considered adults, then these rules do not apply to us.”

Augusta felt as if her head was bursting, being out manoeuvred by Dumbledore was one thing but this was getting embarrassing, as they seemed two steps ahead of them at every turn. “Ok but where does that leave us concerning Snape and Dumbledore?”

It was Jonathon who replied, “Snape is Dumbledore’s Achilles heel, I would suggest getting a confession out of Lestrangle that implicates the man and then use him against Dumbledore.”

Mentioning Lestrangle and Dumbledore in the same sentence was always going to upset Augusta but she could see the poetic justice in

using one murdering criminal to catch another, the old bastard might not appreciate being compared to the psychopath but she was sure his actions had killed just as many as Bellatrix.

Amelia and Augusta thanked them for their tea and frank discussion, thankful for at least gaining their agreement that if either of the men were brought to trial they would testify in the Wizengamot. Arriving back in the ministry both women were not sure how to react to their morning.

“Do you think they were serious about leaving Hogwarts?” Augusta asked.

Amelia had only one answer, “I think they would do whatever it took to keep those children safe and I for one can’t blame them. We have to move quickly on this before something else happens to them and they’re gone for good, I will have Bellatrix removed from Azkaban tomorrow so we can question her. We’re going to have to do this whole thing live in the chamber and just have aurors on standby to react to anything she says. I can’t for the life of me figure out why this wasn’t done the first time and we could have cleared most of this up.” The sarcasm was dripping of her words for that last sentence as both women knew large amounts of gold were involved to ensure certain questions weren’t asked.

Augusta agreed that time was now of the essence and was hoping this would be their opportunity to clear up any death eaters that had escaped them thus far, fatally damaging Dumbledore would be an unbelievable bonus as they should be able to at least get him sacked from Hogwarts. She learned a hard lesson the last time she faced him but that would be the least she would settle for on this occasion, by removing his last remaining powerbase he would be one step closer to his rightful home, Azkaban.

Back at the manor questions were also being asked, “Do you think they bought it?” Hermione queried.

“I don’t see why not, mum you were brilliant. You’ve been spending way to much time with Sirius when you can act like that.”

This was not the way Maia had envisioned breaking the news but Luna had just provided the perfect opening, "Oh and here's me agreed to go out on a date with him Saturday night, does this mean you don't think I should go?"

This comment seemed about as welcome as a fart in a space suit but eventually Luna got up and hugged her mum, "If this is what you want mum then it's ok with us."

Hermione went round and hugged Emma, "Are you ok with this?"

She hugged her daughter for thinking of her before answering, "I'm fine love, Sirius asked me as well. I think he's jealous of his godson having two beautiful girls and thought he would try the same, while I do love the man I'm not in love with him so I declined his very kind offer."

Hermione hugged her tighter, she knew her mother missed her dad and didn't know if she'd ever be able to move on. Thinking of what Harry meant to her gave Hermione some idea of what her mother must be feeling, how can you move on if a part of you is missing.

Sirius picked this moment to enter the room and was immediately confronted by Harry, "It's time for our duelling practice."

He was dragged out the room by his godson and knew he was in trouble when the two Mrs Potters followed them, he was guessing that Maia had broke the news to them. Facing a girl's parents was frightening enough but to face their three kids, all of whom had wands and been taught how to use them, Sirius would rather face an irate father any day.

Jonathon and Martha decided to give the two friends some time alone as Maia sat down beside Emma, "Are you quite sure about your decision, we women are allowed to change our minds you know."

Emma held her best friend's hand and tried to explain, "Maia this is the one time where being non-magical puts me at a serious disadvantage, I have to say no."

Maia couldn't believe what she was hearing, "Emma you know Sirius doesn't buy into any of that pureblood shit, that makes no difference to him. I thought I knew you better than that."

Emma gave a pained smile, "It's not like that Maia, I'm rapidly approaching forty, at sixty I get my bus pass and old age pension with my life expectancy being mid-seventies. At this point you will still be a beautiful woman with about another seventy years in front of you. It's simple biology Maia, not bigotry. I really envy you those extra years but am greatly comforted by the fact that you and Sirius will be here for our family for the next hundred years."

Maia was speechless as she now understood where her friend was coming from, Emma would be old and grey while she and Sirius would be approaching middle aged. It would make no difference to her and Sirius but. if the shoe was on the other foot then nothing would ever convince Maia either that it wouldn't matter. She would just have to give her best friend time and hope she changed her mind but, since time was now the enemy, she doubted it very much.

Maia pulled her into a hug as she whispered to her best friend, "I understand now and think you are wrong but it's your decision to make and you know I'll support you whatever you do."

Emma was now fighting back the tears, "Thanks Maia, you know any children you have I'm just going to treat them like they are mine anyway."

Maia laughed, "We may have the strangest family set-up on the planet but it works for us so who cares what other people think, any children I have will be blessed with two mothers and four siblings and I couldn't be happier about that."

-oOoOo-

Ronald Weasley was giving some serious thought to the direction his life was taking, watching as his young sister became something of an instant celebrity inside Gryffindor from befriending the Potters was one thing, a weekend out of school AND a new broom was something

else. With even the twins being invited he would have to figure out how to tag along, if they were handing out new brooms for free then Ronald Weasley deserved to be at the head of that queue, shit anything new that was free they could put his name down for. He was just considering a letter home to his mother, bemoaning the fact that there had been an oversight by not inviting him as well, when a very familiar voice disrupted his planning session.

“Mr Weasley, your marks are no where near good enough for you to sit day dreaming in my class, in fact your results were so bad last term we considered making you repeat first year.”

For a second Ron thought this might be his answer, Ginny had been ecstatic this morning when she discovered she shared all three of the Potter's classes. He would be able to get to know Harry and let him see what a great guy he was, Ron definitely thought Harry would prefer spending some time hanging around with him rather than those two girls he was always with. Then his dream was dashed as the consequences of such a move were rather forcibly brought to his attention.

“I would hate to be the one to write to your mother and say her son was being held back a year due to poor performance, born not of stupidity but sheer bloody laziness to put in the effort required. If I don't see a marked improvement very shortly then you will leave me with no other option, perhaps you could use this weekend, since your siblings will be away at Lord Potters, to re-examine your goals instead of spending it hunched over a chess board.”

“Yes professor,” he was already re-examining his goals and the main one at the moment was getting himself invited along this weekend, if that squib Longbottom was welcome surely he would be as well. He was about to start thinking of ways to charm himself back into Loony's good books when common sense for once prevailed, he decided to wait until he was out of McGonagall's transfiguration class before giving the problem some more thought.

Probably the wisest decision that he had made in quite some time but then again, even a clock that's stopped is right twice a day.

-oOoOo-

Sirius climbed wearily back onto his feet and cried, "Enough! I get the message, hurt Maia and you'll all kick my arse." Individually Sirius could still beat them but when they combined and Luna concentrated on her abilities to see their movements before they made them, then the trio could take him and Remus down at the same time. With three powerful opponents who moved like one and could also predict what you were going to do then you were about to find yourself landing on your arse with astonishing regularity.

"Why Sirius, whatever do you mean?" Hermione innocently asked.

"When I asked Maia to marry me I didn't expect you to be jumping for joy but this hostility is hurting me a lot more than your curses ever could, do you really hate the idea that much?"

"Marry you? She never said you wanted to get married, just 'date' her," said an astonished Harry.

"That was her idea, she wanted to go on a few dates first to see how we get on so I'm taking her to a fancy restaurant and then dancing. Do you honestly think I would try and take advantage of Maia or Emma?"

Luna walked forward and slowly put her arms around him, "Sirius you can never be my daddy but I would be proud to call you father, that's what you've been to all four of us for a few years now and we love you for it."

Harry and Hermione approached and Sirius pulled them into the hug, "Thanks you guys and don't think I don't know what you were trying to do, I have to say though that Cas warned me years ago about my behaviour towards your mothers and I'm a lot more frightened of her than I am of you three."

"Just goes to show that you finally learned some sense," said Cas from behind them, making all four jump before bursting out laughing.

They all enjoyed the cold juice she had brought for them while silently admitting Sirius was right, Cas could be bloody scary when she wanted to be.

-oOoOo-

Snape marched up and down inside his office as his plans for revenge on the son of his most hated enemy got more and more extreme to become downright outrageous, he'd decided that nothing less than killing the brat would satisfy his need for revenge. Ever since Minerva had mentioned his hated name at the sorting Severus had felt his anger try to take control, one glance at the boy who bore an uncanny resemblance to James Potter and his rage could barely be contained, after that debacle in the great hall he really could only see one option open to him.

It all came down to how much of a risk he was willing to take and his need to see the actual deed carried out, he personally wanted to be there when the Potter line came to an abrupt and premature end by his hand.

Without Dumbledore's continual protection Severus was aware his days of freedom would probably be numbered but if he eradicated the Potters forever he could die a happy man, a maniacal chuckle involuntarily escape his lips when a quite delicious idea for poetic justice came to mind. Albus had the Potter's invisibility cloak locked in his office, oh the irony of using that hated device in the killing of Potter's offspring. He didn't get to kill the father and there wasn't an opportunity to show Lily who was the better man but nothing was going to deny him his ultimate revenge on the Potter line.

Dumbledore had advised against upsetting Sprout but his other two choices made even less sense, only a fool would attempt to go against McGonagall or Flitwick leaving only one conclusion. Severus Snape would kill Harry Potter tomorrow in Herbology while using the boy's own father's invisibility cloak to remain hidden, he should be able to watch undetected as the last light of life leaves the brat's eyes.

A/N Thanks for reading.

Chapter 5

Susan Bones was undergoing the same experience Ginny Weasley had in Gryffindor, unlike her fellow redhead though the Hufflepuff had no answers for her house mates having never spoken to the Potters. She'd spent the whole day answering 'I don't know' to a constant and eclectic barrage of questions, having two 'study periods' hadn't helped as all anyone wanted to talk about was the first year trio.

It was with some relief that she could finally feign tiredness and escape to her dorm, the escape wasn't total though as her best friend Hannah Abbot had followed her up the stairs.

"Running away won't help you know."

"Oh Hannah I just couldn't take it anymore and I know it's going to get worse after I actually spend some time with the Potters."

"Yeah but Suz, even you have to admit he's hot, watching him take down Snape made my insides go all aquiver."

"The two girls that helped him just happen to be his wives, they were beautiful and scary at the same time. Harry has offered me friendship and that's what I want, he doesn't need another girl standing there with drool running down her chin just because he speaks to them, they're already plenty of girls who seem to be vying for that position."

"Do you know they're starting up a 'Harry Potter Fan Club' with you or the Weasley girl's names being put forward as president?"

Susan couldn't believe they were being so foolish, "The last thing he will want is a lot of fan girls chucking their knickers at him, combine that with the fact his two wives seemed capable of handling just about anyone and you can see why there is no chance of me being involved with this rubbish."

Hannah was trying not to laugh at her best friend's indignation, she had known what her reaction would be from the moment she'd heard

the suggestion made by the other girls. "Ok then but now for the really important question, what clothes are you going to wear for your weekend with the Potters?"

The look of panic on Susan's face was almost comical, "Merlin Hannah, I haven't a clue, what am I going to do?"

Hannah would have laughed if not for the seriousness of the situation, her friend was desperate to fit in which required the right clothes, "How about sending an owl to your aunt for advice, she met with them today and should be able to give you some idea of what to expect."

Susan threw her arms round her friend in relief, all thoughts of sleep pushed to the back of her mind; she had another important letter to write.

-oOoOo-

The trio lay in bed that night in a rather reflective mood, they'd had quite a day even by their standards. Harry was running his fingers through his girls' hair as usual but it seemed ineffective tonight, the elephant was in the room so he acknowledged the beast, hoping to put the matter to bed.

"Luna what do you think about Sirius and mum getting married?"

"It will have a big impact on our lives but things can't always stay the same, no matter how much we want them to. They are certain to be watching us closely to see what we think of this, it was clear just how much Sirius was hurt by our reaction today so we're going to have to be careful. I've seen the way mum looks when she's holding Danni, she clearly wants another child and I can't think of a better man for her than Sirius."

Hermione almost whispered, "I think its mum we'll need to keep an eye on, Maia and Sirius getting married could start to drive a wedge between them if she feels left out. We should try as much as possible to include her in everything."

Harry squeezed Hermione tighter, "We already do that sweetheart and you can feel how much we love her, our family might change slightly but it will still be our family, nothing is going to change that."

Their goodnight kisses were more needy that night as the three sought reassurance in a familiar and comforting ritual while the world about them changed beyond their control.

-oOoOo-

The Harry Potter interview that was printed in the Prophet again had the presses running overtime and appeared all the magical population could talk about.

His story up until his ninth birthday was now well documented but the following three years were a total blank, Harry told of how Hedwig came to him, meeting Luna in Diagon Alley and Hermione in the park.

Over his disappearance Harry was non-apologetic, "I gave an interview to the Quibbler and within twenty-four hours Xeno Lovegood was murdered by a member of the Wizengamot in the newspaper's own office with Maia only escaping certain death by the intervention of our phoenix Hedwig. Albus Dumbledore paid her an unannounced visit, bypassing the family's wards, looking for information on my whereabouts. Within a minute of him leaving, Potion Mistress Maia's ingredients began exploding, burning the house where Luna, Hermione and I were supposed to be spending the night to the ground. In an unrelated muggle accident Hermione's father was killed the same day with her mother receiving serious injuries, we were left not-knowing where to turn or who to trust. We had to regroup, rebuilt our family and have gradually went from strength to strength, attending a non-magical school and travelling the world during our holidays."

There followed some highlights of events over the last three years they had attended in the muggle and magical world that most readers would at least recognise, some with a tinge of jealousy at the life they had led.

“ It was not an easy decision to return to the British magical community but as head of an Ancient and Noble family I felt duty bound to at least make an attempt to attend Hogwarts, but only on our terms. Non-magical education had taught us to expect a certain standard of education, our research showed that only a few subjects reached these standards at Hogwarts so we made alternative arrangements for tutoring. We broke our silence as our attending Hogwarts would have a lot of people with unanswered questions; we hope this article will allow us to be treated like normal Hogwarts students. The Potters have personal issues with certain Hogwarts professors but now we have returned to the British magical world, we will be contacting the relevant authorities with the hope that the appropriate action can be taken. We have watched with interest the gradual but steady improvement in the justice system and now feel it is time to put our collective faith in it, we know they will do their best and await the outcome with confidence.”

Events from their introduction to Hogwarts were reported exclusively in this newspaper yesterday and we can now reveal that for his attack on three first year Hufflepuffs, all with the last name Potter, Professor Snape has been suspended. For failing to protect these students, he in fact tried to confine them to the castle by use of spells to lock the doors, Headmaster Dumbledore was also suspended. A special meeting of the Hogwarts school board has been called for Monday, with both wizards' futures at the top of what one would imagine would be a very long agenda.

-oOoOo-

The twins were in awe of some of the things the Potters had seen and done, these three were not your usual icky first years whose journey on the express was their first trip anywhere, even the muggles were apprehensive about their first time alone in the magical world. No wonder those three had walked in here full of confidence, they'd seen and done more than most of the staff.

Ginny was now starting to stress about spending the weekend with these people, the Luna she knew before was nothing like the girl described in these stories. Ginny had rarely ventured outside Ottery St Catchpole with Diagon Alley being the height of exotica to her;

they had travelled the world, both muggles and magical. Her dad had enchanted their old car to fly but Luna had actually been on an aeroplane as part of their schoolwork, she was left wishing she could have attended school with her friend before Hogwarts.

Ron was more determined than ever to worm his way to the Potters this weekend, reading that they were at the last world cup in Italy had him turning green with envy. Knowing that the tournament was scheduled to come to England in two years gave him plenty of time to ingratiate himself with the one person certain to have good tickets, there was always a chance his dad could get some but Potter was a sure thing. There was no time like the present to begin the Ronald Weasley charm offensive.

Neville was deep in thought at the life the Potters had led; he himself would be regarded as privileged with his grandmother grooming him to take on the mantle of Lord Longbottom. He couldn't help but think that while he was being handed lessons in etiquette, Harry was out there experiencing 'real life'. The British magical community seemed determined to build a moat between itself and the rest of the world while the Potters had embraced the diversity with open arms, judging by the impact they had made since hitting Hogwarts, Neville could clearly see the benefits to be gained from that approach. He seriously doubted if his traditionalist pureblood grandmother would see things that way but he would wager that a few people would be asking questions over the practice of waiting until children were eleven to begin their formal education, he would also wager that was Harry's whole point in giving the interview.

Pomona Sprout almost laughed at the comment about being treated like normal Hogwarts students, there was more chance of her appearing nude in next month's 'Wicked Witches' than someone who defeated a dark lord, had a white phoenix familiar and two wives before he was a teenager being treated as normal.

-oOoOo-

Hedwig flashed the three Potters into the great hall in plenty time before their first class, unfortunately Ronald Weasley was on them in an instant.

“Hey Looney, sorry we seemed to get off on the wrong foot...”

Ron was caught short in his prepared speech by the extremely unpleasant sensation of a wand jabbing painfully into his groin while his vision seemed to be full of a raging bushy haired witch.

Hermione's voice was low but the menace it contained was not diminished one iota by the lack of volume, “You will apologise to Lady Luna for insulting her with that name. You will then stay the hell away from us or I will cast a silent blasting curse that ensures our children will never have to be troubled by any of your moronic offspring.”

Ron had just discovered something that frightened him a lot more than spiders ever could, this girl was seriously scary as there was not one shred of doubt in his tiny mind she would carry out her threat. Since Ron would prefer to have at least used it before losing it, he mumbled an apology of sorts and fled the hall without even finishing his breakfast.

Pomona Sprout was right on Hermione's shoulder, “Is there any trouble here?”

“Oh no professor,” answered Hermione as her unseen wand disappeared back up her sleeve and into its holster. “We thought it had been made perfectly clear that nobody messes with our family but there's always at least one moron that requires a personal explanation. I'm sure Mr Ronald Weasley got the point I was trying to make.”

Harry couldn't help but laugh, he was sure the point of Hermione's wand had made quite the impression on the boy, something he would remember for a very long time.

Susan and Hannah were at the other side from their head of house and had a perfect view of Hermione's wand work, both vowed to get the girl to teach them how she did that. Neither could think of a finer example of how to deal with unwelcome advances from moronic

males, what better way to cool a hormonal boy's ardour than by pushing your wand against his and threatening to blow it off.

Having just received an answer from her aunt who had visited the Potters at home, Susan was feeling mightily relieved at her assessment that they were alarmingly normal for their position in society. She could cope with t-shirt, jeans and trainers as most witches had copied their muggle born friend's attire because it was so comfortable and practical.

Ginny came over and apologised as soon as professor Sprout had left the trio, "Sorry about Ron, he really is turning into a right prat."

"No Ginny," answered Luna, "He has always called me by that name, in fact I think it was him who coined it. Ron just doesn't care about anyone's feelings other than his own, he probably doesn't even know what he did wrong."

Harry put his arm around Hermione, "Well thanks to our warrior princess here he won't be using it again. How was your first day of classes Ginny?"

Ginny wrinkled her nose in disgust, "We had History of Magic with the Slytherins as our first class, what an introduction to Hogwarts, I nearly fell asleep. Potions was supposed to be after that but with Snape suspended it became study time, I'm really looking forward to Herbology this morning followed by Transfiguration to see what Hogwarts is really like."

"My mum teaches us potions on a Saturday afternoon and we do practical defence on a Sunday before lunch, you're welcome to join us." The twins had joined them, along with Neville and Susan who were all keen to accept Luna's offer.

Introductions followed with the Potters saying they would catch up with everyone at lunchtime to discuss the weekend, because their muggle school didn't start until Monday they had no classes to leave for yet. Hermione had to explain that not all muggle schools taught everything at all levels, their school was under the correct impression

that they were receiving lessons in subjects not offered there, just no details on what those subjects were.

The four first years said cheerio and headed towards the greenhouses for their first Herbology lesson.

-oOoOo-

The six aurors who arrived at Azkaban to collect the much-feared Bellatrix Lestrange got a shock; instead of the raving psychopath they had expected they found a frail, broken husk of a witch. She was clearly emaciated as the unflattering tattered robe hung on her like a potato sack, her once black hair was now streaked with white and she wouldn't even look them in the eye. Bellatrix kept her head bowed, obeyed their every command instantly and the only words spoken were 'yes sir' and 'no sir'. The fearsome reputation of Azkaban just went up another notch if it could reduce Bellatrix Lestrange to this state, each of the six agreed that even visiting the place was more than enough for them. Their prisoner had to be helped onto the boat where she sat quietly in a corner, silently and demurely staring at the magic inhibiting manacles that now adorned her wrist, she didn't speak one word as the small boat cast off and headed for the mainland.

-oOoOo-

Severus Snape hadn't slept much last night and this morning's Prophet just hardened his decision, people up and down the country would be laughing and cheering that he had been suspended. There was no chance this suspension wouldn't become permanent and you wouldn't find many willing to place a bet that he could avoid Azkaban for attacking the little shit, Severus would see how many people were cheering tomorrow as the newspaper announced the death of their hero.

The main reason he had struggled to sleep though was because he couldn't make up his mind what curse to use when carrying out the deed, Avada Kedavra he dismissed almost immediately as being too quick and clean, he wanted to see some gore. Sectumsempra was his preferred choice but it had a couple of problems, Poppy might get

to the brat in time to save him and it was his signature curse, he might as well stamp 'Severus Snape was here' on Potter's forehead alongside that bloody scar. He finally settled for a Reducto to the torso from close range, this should blast a hole right through him and, even if Poppy arrived in record time, she would have to search the greenhouse for the bits needed to put Potter back together.

The image of the Potter boy lying on the ground with his innards leaking out through his chest had been just too pleasant a thought to allow Severus any sleep, he donned the cloak and headed off towards the greenhouses. He wanted to get there early and choose a spot where no one would bump into him but he could still have a wide field of fire. His plan of sneaking out amidst the confusion a dying Potter was sure to generate was not a great one, he was aware of this on some level of his mind but anger had over ridden any thoughts of caution, as long as he got to see the boy die then he could live with whatever punishment came his way.

-oOoOo-

Maia had a well stocked greenhouse back at the manor so the Potters were no strangers to having a trowel in their hands, the class were split to work in pairs as Harry and Hermione teamed up while Luna partnered Ginny as the four of them shared the same work table.

Pomona watched the quartet as they quietly chatted amongst themselves while carrying out their assigned task with obvious skill, she made her way down the greenhouse to offer help where needed. Her attention quickly returned to the Potter's table when Luna screamed.

They were chatting quite comfortably with Ginny when Luna suddenly screamed "HEDWIG!" and then all hell broke loose.

Severus had worked his way slowly and quietly until he was behind the blond and redhead but, more importantly, facing Potter. He was savouring the moment while working the tip of his wand out the front of the cloak when the blond screamed, he fired the curse but felt terrible pain in his shoulders as he was dragged backwards.

Harry and Hermione watched as Hedwig responded instantly to Luna's frantic call, the white phoenix appeared to sink her talons into fresh air before forcing it backwards. A curse fired from nowhere straight into the greenhouse roof, showering everyone with shards of broken glass.

Hedwig had forced the assassin down onto his back while snatching the wand out his hand with her beak, she then flew into the air with Snape still held in her talons before letting go and Severus crashed cloak-less onto the Potter's work bench.

He hardly had time to groan when he was hit with a spell that left about four hundred cactus spikes protruding from all over his body, they were at least a couple of inches long with the pointy ends embedded in Snape. This was quickly followed by a spell that had him wrapped securely in vines, he was totally immobilised but was beyond caring as the pain from the spikes was so severe to render anything else inconsequential. Pomona's third curse to hit the murdering bastard was a silencing charm, not that she couldn't have listened to the coward scream all day but she had injured students and he was a distraction.

Luna was staring at Harry and Hermione, both of whom had blood running out of cuts on their heads and faces, "Oh I'm so sorry I wasn't quick enough, I only got a few seconds because I wasn't concentrating..."

Harry silenced Luna by taking her in his arms and kissing her until she calmed down a bit, she was cut just as badly but as usual her concern for her bond mates overrode her own injuries. He then pulled Hermione in and did the same with her, it was like a confirmation that they had survived and were still standing.

The two girls pulled a bleeding but now shaking Ginny into the huddle as they glanced around at the devastation, both tables either side of theirs had students hit by glass as the scene resembled something from a horror movie. Pomona was busy trying to quell the panic and get the students safely out the greenhouse before any more glass came down on their heads. Hedwig landed on Harry's shoulder and presented him with the cape and wand she had removed from the

murderer, Harry stopped her using phoenix healing tears on him and his girls did the same.

When the phoenix cried on Ginny she was confused, "Why isn't she healing you three first?"

It was Harry who answered, "I asked her not to, I want this piece of shit on trial today and these scars will make sure the bastard gets what's coming to him. I asked the girls to let Hedwig heal them but they refused for the same reason."

"Well don't let her heal me, my dad works for the ministry and we're an old pureblood family, me walking in there with these scars will help as well. You can fix them later though, right?"

Luna had her arm around her shoulders, "Ginny my mum's a genius at it, she got more practice than you would believe possible with Harry."

The three girls left as Harry asked Hedwig to start ferrying the injured to the infirmary, the ground now crunched under their feet as they tried to avoid the worst of the damage on the way out.

Harry turned back to face Snape and picked up his discarded garden trowel, "Both my girls have lost their fathers and now you would take their husband as well? You would leave my little Danni without her big brother? The only reason you're still alive is to put Dumbledore in Azkaban but that doesn't mean you're getting away with attacking my family." Harry used the flat of the trowel to start hitting the protruding spikes on Snape's legs, driving any he hit in about another inch as Snape tried frantically to avoid the trowel.

Pomona had come back for Harry and was just about to intervene when he stopped after four or five hits, he then waited a moment on Snape's eyes coming back into some sort of focus before talking to him again "Know this Snivellus, you're going down and it was three Potters, helped by a Black and a Lupin who did it, now doesn't that hurt worse than the spikes?"

Harry turned and almost walked into Professor Sprout just as Hedwig flamed onto his shoulder, "Hedwig says all the injured are safely in the infirmary so, since the other students are heading back to the castle, would you care to join me?"

Pomona glanced at Snape before Harry answered, "Don't worry about him, he's not going anywhere, let's just leave him here until the aurors come." She nodded so Harry took her arm and in a flash they were in the infirmary, straight into the middle of a shouting match that appeared to be rapidly escalating towards wands draw.

-oOoOo-

Bellatrix shuffled into the Wizengamot chamber to total silence, this was the most feared witch in Britain? She sat on the chair, looking as if she would have fell down if forced to stand and the chains confining her now appeared absurd. She opened her mouth, sticking her tongue out when requested as the truth serum was administered.

Amelia was just about to begin questioning the death eater when Hedwig flamed into the chamber with a scroll for the head of the DMLE, only she and Augusta had actually seen the white phoenix so this was quite an entrance. As Amelia read the scroll her face first drained of colour, before becoming almost purple with rage.

"Shacklebolt, take four aurors to Hogwarts and arrest Severus Snape for the attempted murder of Lord Potter, bring him straight to this chamber and we'll sort out the rest of the charges by the time you get here, we'll deal with this today."

Augusta glanced at her friend, desperate for more information, this was the scenario they were desperate to avoid.

Amelia looked directly into Hedwig's eyes, the scroll said the phoenix would understand her and pass on the message. "Hedwig tell Lord Potter we will be ready for his party in one hour." Hedwig nodded and flashed out as Amelia addressed the Wizengamot.

“Today at a Herbology lesson consisting of first year Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs, Severus Snape concealed himself with an invisibility cloak and tried to murder Lord Potter. The attack was thwarted by Hedwig and then Professor Sprout subdued the would be assassin but his curse damaged the greenhouse, there are currently at least a dozen Hogwarts students in the infirmary being treated for cuts from broken glass. Lord Potter has asked if this matter could be dealt with swiftly and I have agreed, we are all here so let’s just hold it directly after this hearing.”

Amelia was well aware the thought of Fudge finally getting to meet Lord Potter would guarantee the minister would agree with her request and that’s exactly what he did.

She turned her attention back to the case in hand and began to question Bellatrix, it was time to close the lid on Dumbledore’s pet death eater.

“ What was Severus Snape’s position in the death eater organisation?”

“He was our potion brewer and my master’s most trusted spy.”

“What information did he pass on?”

“He told my master of a prophecy that a child would be born who could defeat him.”

“How did he respond to that?”

“My master didn’t believe it but was not one to take unnecessary risks, he ordered both families killed.”

This was the big question as Amelia asked, “Who were these families?”

“The Potters and the Longbottoms.”

As expected this almost started a riot but the number of aurors present had normality restored in short order.

“Have you seen Snape kill anyone?”

“Yes.”

“One more than one occasion?”

“Yes.”

Amelia stopped the interrogation there, she would rather use the time to pump Snape for every scrap of information he had, Bellatrix had been in Azkaban for over a decade while his information should be bang up to date.

She addressed the chamber, “Severus Snape escaped trial by being personally vouched for by Albus Dumbledore, I think this chamber and the public deserve to know just what is going on between these two wizards.”

Bellatrix Lestrange was a broken witch who had to be helped from the chamber as her legs were shaking at the unaccustomed exercise. She was being taken straight back to her cell in Azkaban.

-oOoOo-

Madam Pomfrey was getting into a right state, “I will not be told by a first year how to treat my patients.”

Hermione wasn't for backing down, “Well then Madam Pomfrey we shall just remove ourselves from your care, I am Lady Hermione Potter and will not be treated like a four-year-old by a school nurse.”

“I am a healer and refuse to do a partial job, how dare you even ask that.”

Harry and Pomona's entrance had been ignored by everyone in preference to the clash taking place before them, Harry decided it was time to unleash the big guns, "CAS!"

The elf appeared in her human form as they had agreed she would if called to Hogwarts, "What can I ...Who did this to my family?" the anger she displayed almost lost her form but it made even Pomfrey back away.

"Cas we're ok, the attacker is being dealt with. Can you please stop the bleeding but leave the scars for now, I hope to have a date with the Wizengamot later today." Harry's words took the fight out of Poppy, "Can you supply me with some writing materials please Cas?"

He was writing his notes while Cas was treating Luna, Poppy still wouldn't let it go though, "Why didn't you tell me what you were doing?" the healer asked Hermione.

Hermione though had switched to 'taking no shit' mode and wasn't in the mood to placate anyone's ego, "You didn't give us a chance, you're the healer while we're just annoying first years who don't know what we're talking about. Shut-up and do what I tell you because I know best seems to be the prevalent attitude amongst the British magical community, its no wonder you're so far behind the rest of the world when you don't want to listen to anybody's opinions or ideas but your own."

Before Poppy could conjure a comeback Luna entered the fray, "A Hogwarts professor just tried to murder our husband, at this moment in time the list of staff we trust has one name on it. Professor Sprout thank you for your quick action today, you, unlike others we could mention, have earned our trust."

Harry gave the notes to Hedwig and she left as Cas began to work on him now, Albus had waited until the phoenix left to reach for his wand and point it at Cas.

"I don't know who or what you are but nothing can come through Hogwarts wards, throw down your wand now!"

Cas snapped her fingers and Albus was not only without his wand but found himself stuck to the ceiling, thankfully for everyone the night-shirt he was wearing covered his whole body. "You listen to me old man, I spent months rubbing lotion into this boys back to remove scars he received from the place you illegally put him. I am also aware you nearly made my Luna an orphan so one more word out of you and I will be dropping your scrawny old body off the highest tower. Oh and in case you've forgotten, Fawkes won't be coming to save you, he's staying with us for the moment."

Minerva rushed into the infirmary, "Pomona what happened, is everyone ok?"

"Professor McGonagall, Hedwig has just informed me that five aurors are on their way here to arrest Snape and we have a hearing in front of the Wizengamot in an hour. This unfortunately means we are going to miss your class today and I think Professor Sprout's presence will be required at the ministry as well."

"Will you need to use the school floo from the headmaster's office?"

"No Professor we've got it covered, ah it appears there will be one more in our party."

-oOoOo-

Arthur Weasley was on his second cup of coffee when it ended up all over today's Prophet, the white phoenix that flamed into his tiny office almost frightened the life out of him.

He carefully took the offered note and had an immediate change in attitude, the note said Ginny was injured when Snape tried to murder the Potters but she wished to testify against their attacker, would he like to go to Hogwarts to see her? His "yes" had him there in a flash to see his daughter with cuts all over her lovely face and her robes covered in blood.

Ginny rushed into her father's arms, "I'm all right dad, it was very scary but Professor Sprout was brilliant, so were you Hedwig."

"Mr Weasley, Ginny wishes to testify at the hearing but needs your permission and attendance."

"Lord Potter, anyone who attacks children deserves all they get so of course I'll agree, when is it and can we get Ginny treated and into clean clothes?"

Harry tried to smile but couldn't quite pull it off, "It's actually this morning and we want to leave things as they are to make an entrance, first impressions are very important, what did you think when you saw Ginny?"

"That I wanted to skin whoever did this alive," the fire in Arthur Weasley's eyes told everyone all they needed to know.

Hermione just nodded, "That's exactly the effect we're going for, how many members of the Wizengamot would you say are parents or grandparents? Snape may have escaped justice all these years but not today, he'll be staying in Azkaban from now on."

Cas made a suggestion, "Why don't we go back to the manor and have a cup of tea to calm everyone down before your trip to the ministry, it would be better to do this with a clear head."

"Ok but you have to make sure Danni doesn't see us, there's no telling what she would do."

Hermione was left to explain Harry's comment, "She saw Harry had been injured from practicing duelling with Sirius, a chair flew across the room and smacked Sirius on the head, she also wouldn't speak to him for about a week."

"I thought you said she was only two?" a bemused Ginny asked.

"She is, and the little tyke is going to be just as powerful as her big sister," the pride in Harry's voice was unmistakable.

It was McGonagall who brought up the subject of the old wizard still stuck to the ceiling, "Lord Potter do you think you could release him?"

Harry glanced at Cas who sighed before releasing him, Albus plummeted from the ceiling and landed on the bed, only to bounce right off and clatter onto the stone floor with enough force to re-break his hip. The crack was clearly heard as everyone winced, that just had to hurt. Cas was unrepentant, "I landed him on the bed, not my fault he couldn't stay on it. I still think my idea of dropping him off a tower is the better option."

Luna added her two Knut's worth, "While we're not totally against the idea Cas, could you just make sure Danni's out the way and warn them about the incoming wounded."

Cas popped away as Hermione chuckled, "Luna you need to cut down on those M.A.S.H. episodes."

Hedwig then flashed the six people out as Minerva watched Poppy treat Albus again, she was sure the story would be all over Hogwarts by lunchtime. Minerva dreaded to think what tomorrows Prophet would have as its headline but believed the muggles had a saying that aptly applied to this situation, the brown stuff was about to be introduced to the whirly thing.

A/N Thanks for reading

My version of Snape is based on the character at the end of Prisoner of Azkaban. How anyone could expect us to believe Harry would name a child after the person who was going nuts because Sirius didn't get kissed is beyond me.

Chapter 6

McGonagall met the aurors at the gate and led them towards the damaged greenhouse, she'd put Hagrid on guard to make sure Snape wasn't going anywhere, one look at all the spilt blood from the children had Hagrid almost hoping the murdering swine would try to escape.

When Shacklebolt viewed the crime scene he was sure Snape was going down, the blast that hit the roof would have killed anything smaller than a mountain troll, a twelve-year-old boy wouldn't have had a hope of surviving if that curse hit his body. "Professor McGonagall, do you know what happened to the invisibility cloak and Snape's wand?"

"Lord Potter had them, I'm certain he'll bring them to the trial. I want to go with you as my next class is cancelled since this piece of work put most of them in the infirmary"

The youngest auror approached Shacklebolt, "Sir, should we try and reverse some of those curses, the prisoner appears to be in a great deal of pain."

Shacklebolt asked McGonagall, "How many?"

"Fourteen with cuts all over and another five suffering from shock after seeing their classmates sliced open by flying glass."

Shacklebolt stared hard at the young auror, "The prisoner put nineteen kids in the infirmary, what do you think we should do auror?"

The auror's jaw hardened, "Well sir, those curses were applied by a master of their craft, if we tried to remove them we might just make his situation worse, my recommendation would be to leave as is and transport him as best we can."

Shack grinned, "Outstanding answer son, and that's exactly what I'll say to Madam Bones if she asks me why we left him looking like a pin cushion."

Snape was levitated none to carefully as the group made its way outside Hogwarts wards so they could apparate to the ministry, thankful for the silencing charm that was still holding on the murdering git.

-oOoOo-

Hedwig flashed them into Potter Manor and both girls leapt into the waiting arms of Maia and Sirius while Harry was hugging an elf, the other three in the group had some of the blanks filled in when Harry spoke to the little female, "Cas you were wonderful, Dumbledore didn't have a clue what he was up against."

"I still think you should have let me drop him off a tower for all the hurt he's caused this family, I just hope this Snape goes away for a very long time or he'll find me waiting on him for what he's done to you," the tender way she touched the cuts on the boy's face was in complete contrast to the steel in her voice, these were not idle threats this elf was making.

Maia was handing out a potion to the kids and handling the introductions at the same time, "Hello Arthur, nice to see you again and you must be Professor Sprout, I'm Maia Lovegood and that is Sirius Black, I believe you've already met Cas and Emma has taken little Danni a walk down to the stables. You're very welcome in our home, I just wish the circumstances were a bit better.

Ginny felt instantly better after drinking the potion and it tasted of strawberries, Luna understood the confused look on her face, "Mum has her own version of a blood replenishing potion, as well as replenishing it has the same effect as a pepper-up and her potions always taste good, you'll feel much better but this afternoon we'll all need a nap."

Sirius meanwhile couldn't take his eyes off the cloak in Harry's hands, "Where did you get that?"

“The git was using it to sneak up on us, Hedwig got there in the nick of time then Professor Sprout was amazing.”

Sirius was trying to contain his anger, at least until his suspicions were confirmed, “Let’s go through and have some tea, we really need to talk to your grandparents Harry.”

Cas and Dobby had tea, juice and a selection of cakes and scones laid out but Sirius just wanted Jonathon to see the cloak, the man in the portrait recognised it instantly but was more concerned for his grandchildren at the moment, “Are you all ok? Don’t take this the wrong way but you look hellish.”

Harry chuckled, “Thanks granddad, that’s the effect we’re trying to portray, we’re up in front of the Wizengamot shortly to see Snape charged.”

“Well you can add theft to the list of charges he’s facing because that invisibility cloak is a Potter family heirloom that’s been handed down for generations, how Snape got hold of it is something you need to ask Amelia to question him about.”

They had all got use to holding their temper as, for quite a while Harry had regressed every time he’d seen someone get angry, there was just no way Sirius could hold this, “That sick son of a bitch probably got his jolly’s from the idea of using James’s cloak to kill Harry, I swear if the Wizengamot don’t deal with him today then I’ll challenge the shit to a duel and kill him myself. One way or another, this is going to end today.”

Sirius felt Maia’s hand on his arm and calmed down a bit, “Sorry about that folks but this really will end today.” When he noticed his godson there was a look of absolute wonder in his eyes as he held the cloak like priceless treasure.

“This was really my father’s invisibility cloak?”

The look of longing in his eyes dissolved the last of Sirius's anger, "Yes it was and someday when there aren't any mother's or heads of house listening I'll tell you of some of the things we used it for."

"Oh I think the mothers definitely want to be present for that one," piped in Maia.

Pomona had them all laughing with, "I think that is one conversation their head of house definitely doesn't want to be present for, though I'm sure Minerva would love it and still try to give Sirius detention for all the trouble you caused her." Their head of house was delighted to see these three behaving like normal children, she now suspected that the persona they projected at Hogwarts was a front and her memory of the four students chatting away in Herbology confirmed it in her own mind, perhaps if they got rid of Snape and Dumbledore then they would be able to relax and allow the real Potters to emerge.

"Lord Potter..."

"Please Mr Weasley, you're a guest in my home so it's just Harry."

"Thank you Harry, it's about this visit to the Wizengamot, I assume you want to make an entrance?"

-oOoOo-

The chamber was in uproar at the condition of Snape, Shack's explanation wasn't cutting any ice until the doors opened to admit the four students, followed by Arthur, Maia, Sirius and Pomona. They were met by total silence as they walked towards Madam Bones. Arthur had convinced them that a slow walk through the doors would have more of the required effect than flashing into the middle of the chamber, they wanted all eyes on the kids and not the white phoenix.

"Lord Potter, does your party require a healer?" Amelia asked, all concern for the bastard who did this instantly forgotten. This was the consensus right throughout the chamber, anyone who could do this to children deserved everything they got. Without saying a word they had the whole Wizengamot on their side.

“Thank you for your concern Madam Bones but we have been patched up and our own healer is standing by for when these proceedings finish, we figured that justice was more important than a few scars and a change of clothes. Miss Weasley is here because she was working as part of our group when the attack took place and also wanted to see justice done. Here is his wand and this is the invisibility cloak he was using, I have it on very good authority that this is a Potter family heirloom and would like to know how it came to be in his possession, obviously he was deriving some sick pleasure from using it to murder me.”

“Lord Potter, I’m Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, I had hoped we could have time for a chat after these proceedings.”

“I’m sorry minister but the blood replenishing potions we were required to take means that this afternoon will be spent sleeping as soon as our healer is finished their work.”

Augusta wasn’t about to let this degenerate into a publicity opportunity for Fudge, “Professor Sprout, I understand the need to incapacitate the accused but we are unable to try him in this condition. We have more than enough aurors present to ensure he isn’t going anywhere so could you please reverse those impressive charms of yours.”

Pomona removed the cactus spikes none too gently and the vines withered away, Snape was left looking like he had a severe case of painful boils at the site of every extraction, this did not deter the aurors as they manhandled him into a chair and wrapped his body in chains. The silencing charm was left on him as they quickly decided to hear the Hogwarts evidence before letting Snape speak, they heard from Pomona first as the rest of them sat down.

Amelia began the questioning, “Professor Sprout, could you explain what happened this morning in your first year Herbology lesson.”

“I had demonstrated their task and was walking along the tables to ensure that everyone was coping when I heard the Lady Luna

screaming for Hedwig, I spun around in time to see the phoenix grab something I couldn't see and a curse fly out from nowhere. It narrowly missed Lord Potter and Lady Hermione before blasting the roof to smithereens."

"Do you think the intention was to kill Lord Potter?"

"There is no doubt in my mind that the accused meant to murder the lad, if not for the Lady Luna and the intervention of Hedwig, Lord Harry Potter would be dead. As it was the curse hit the greenhouse roof and we had shards of razor sharp glass raining down on the children, some of the results you see before you."

"Lord Potter's note praised your quick action in incapacitating the attacker, why did you leave your former colleague in that condition?"

"When discovering the attacker's identity I was incensed that a supposed educator could even consider that action, this was the second time he had attempted to attack Lord Potter and I intended to ensure it was his last. As for leaving him in that condition, I had a greenhouse that was falling about my ears yet still full of bleeding and hysterical children that required my attention, my first responsibility is always the welfare of the children, not someone who tried to murder them."

After a few more questions Pomona was thanked not only for her time but quick and decisive actions that saved the day, Luna was then called to answer questions.

Amelia began very gently, "Professor Sprout called you Lady Luna, is it ok if we use that form of address here today?"

The smile from the young blond witch in the blood covered robes melted hearts and hardened minds throughout the Wizengamot, "Oh that's fine madam, as the professor said to us, two Lady Potter's in the same class could get quite confusing."

Amelia's smile back was genuine, "Can you explain to us what happened this morning and why you called for your phoenix?"

“I was working along side Ginny and across from Harry and Hermione when I felt someone behind me, I could see the professor had worked her way down to the other end of the greenhouse so there should have been no one there. I screamed for Hedwig to get Harry out of there, I’ve already lost my father to death eaters and couldn’t bear to lose my husband as well, Hedwig as usual had her own ideas on how to handle the situation and saved us all.” Luna as now openly crying but there was a burst of flames beside her as the white phoenix landed on her shoulder and sang to lift her spirits. She walked back to her family with the magical bird still singing on her shoulder and in the eyes of the Wizengamot, Snape’s goose was already cooked.

Harry was called next but it was more to appease the Wizengamot than anything his evidence could add, there was no way they would settle for having the boy-who-lived there and not hear him speak. “When Hedwig dropped Snape on to our worktable I was reaching for my wand only to find Professor Sprout had the situation well in hand, we then offered Hedwig’s assistance to get the injured to the infirmary, after which she contacted Madam Bones and then brought Ginny’s father to her. Our girl has had a busy morning!”

“Can I ask why you sought out Mr Weasley?”

Harry’s face was grim, “Ginny is in that condition solely because she befriended us, the infirmary at Hogwarts is full of students whose only fault was that they were in the same classroom as the Potters. We are currently reconsidering our decision to attend Hogwarts as there are people in this chamber now whose relatives in the castle could be put at risk because we attend.”

Amelia had feared this reaction since receiving the note earlier from Hedwig, “Lord Potter, as you know my niece attends Hogwarts but I for one do not wish you to leave, it is our job, combined with the acting Headmistress here and your head of house to ensure that Hogwarts is safe for all students. I realise that being attacked twice by a professor is hardly likely to endear Hogwarts to you but I would urge you to give it a chance.”

“We spoke to Susan this morning Ma’am but at the moment all I can promise is not to make a hasty decision, we will give it serious thought.”

Shacklebolt followed on to confirm that the scene he found matched the descriptions of what he had heard described, it was now time to question Snape but Augusta could see that the children were flagging, the Weasley girl was almost asleep in her father’s arms.

“Amelia is there any reason that the students need to remain here? They’ve had a traumatic morning and are clearly suffering for it. The trial will of course continue in their absence.”

Amelia concurred but Sirius decided to stay, as they left Harry spoke to Arthur, “Mr Weasley, could Ginny come home with us? This will allow Cas and Maia to treat her injuries properly. I realise you and your wife will be worried about her so would like to invite you both to diner tonight.”

Arthur knew Molly would be worried sick, he was also aware that should he take Ginny home and tell her he’d turned down an invitation to dine with the Potters he’d be sleeping in his shed for at least a month.

They agreed someone would pick them up at seven as Hedwig returned them to Potter Manor.

-oOoOo-

Ginny awoke in a four poster bed that was in a room fit for a princess, she’d been very tired as Cas had helped her into a shower before being given another potion and applying lotion to her cuts, promising that by the time she met her mother tonight there would be little sign of the attack.

She hadn’t worried about it at the time but now was slightly concerned as the clothes she had been wearing had taken quite a beating, her mother was very good with the repair charms but even

she would be challenged with the amount of rips and dried blood. What Ginny hadn't been prepared for was the new clothes laid out for her to wear, she must have lain there just staring at them for twenty minutes before the door chapped with Luna and Hermione walking into the room, "Cas told us you were awake but not yet up, we just popped in to see if everything was alright," Luna said.

"I don't really know Luna, I'm not sure if I'm awake or having a really good dream."

Hermione burst out laughing, "Ginny the three of us do that at least once a week, the other two have to reassure the one that it is real, what made you think that?"

Ginny let her gaze travel around the room, finally noticing that she was also wearing new pyjamas, "All this and these as well, what is all this and where are my own clothes?"

Hermione couldn't understand the problem, "You don't like them? Cas is usually very good at choosing clothes and she did it while we were at the ministry."

"Hermione, these are better than any clothes I own, these are better than any clothes I've ever owned but I can't accept them."

"Well Harry's just going to have to wear a blindfold then because the only girl's he's allowed to see without clothes is us, and the ones you were wearing couldn't be repaired."

Ginny's problem was temporarily forgotten as her mind tried to take in what she'd just been told, "Harry's seen you both naked?"

"Ginny we told you we were married, what did you think that meant?"

Hermione's question had thrown her even more, "I don't know, I understand married but obviously not how it works between you three, I mean with your ages and the fact that both of you are wives. I hope you don't think I'm being nosey or something but I haven't a clue."

Luna put her arm around her friend, "Don't worry about it Ginny, it seems perfectly natural to us because this is who we are but I dare say if our positions were different I would wonder to. I don't think I would be giving any secrets away to say that the three of us share the same room, spending every night cuddling into Harry gets to be pretty addictive and neither of us wives would change a thing. We all three learn together and share everything with each other, right down to mothers, sisters, godfathers or friends."

Luna had her other arm around Hermione now, "You were my only friend Ginny, in fact you were the only friend between the three of us as we were all pretty lonely growing up, Hermione and Harry were both bullied when younger which is why she reacted so strongly to Ron calling me that name. So not only are you special by being the only friend we had but Ginny, you also helped capture the wizard responsible for making Harry an orphan and Sirius ending up in Azkaban. These clothes are not some form of payment but rather as a gift to a friend in need, the same way no one ever leaves your house without your mother trying to feed them."

It all went quiet for a moment before Hermione got up with glistening eyes, "Excuse me but I need to go and find our husband and kiss him for being the kindest, most caring person on the planet."

She left leaving Luna to explain, "Sirius asked my mum out on a date this Saturday night and we were worried that Emma would feel left out, Harry's just asked our 'Auntie Em' if she will come with us all bowling the same night as there will be five purebloods present who won't have a clue what to do. We're going to have a birthday night out for Hermione in a couple of weeks with our muggle friends and hoped some of you could make it, we'll also be having another celebration that you're definitely invited to."

Ginny's head was spinning even more than before, "How could you both possibly know what Harry was doing when you were here with me?"

“We’re inside each other’s heads so can feel emotions and transmit our thoughts,” Luna smiled, “Hermione just found Harry and she’s really happy with him.”

This was getting too weird for Ginny, she just couldn’t believe what she was hearing and let it show on her face as well as in her voice, “Hermione is kissing Harry and not only can you tell from another room but you’re pleased about it? This is really so strange, aren’t you even slightly jealous that another girl is kissing your boy?”

Luna had thought she was beyond being hurt by people thinking she was strange but that hateful name earlier and now the way Ginny was looking at her brought it all back. “If another girl was kissing Harry there’d be hell to pay but Hermione isn’t another girl, he’s our husband and we could never be jealous over each other, if their happy then I’m happy.” Luna couldn’t hide the disappointment in her voice, “We had hoped people would understand but, if someone who was my friend can look at me as if I’m some kind of strange thing in a specimen jar then I guess there’s no chance of others excepting us.”

Luna got up to leave, “Just wear the stupid clothes today Ginny, you can send them back tomorrow and Cas will take them all to a charity shop. Looks like there’s nothing for us at Hogwarts...”

Harry came running into the room, uncaring that it was Ginny’s and scooped Luna into his arms, “I’ve got you love.”

Hermione was in a far different mood from when she left, “What did you say to Luna that’s got her so upset, we thought you were her friend?”

“I was just trying to understand your relationship, I didn’t mean to upset her.”

“You want to understand? Be ready in five minutes!” this was not a request from Harry but an order.

Five minutes later Ginny found herself flying faster than she ever had before trying to keep up with the trio in front of her, the new broom

she had under her was fantastic but the three in front were just awesome! They obviously were familiar with the route but still their skill on a broom rivalled Charlie's. They landed in a small walled area and Harry took the girl's brooms before heading over to a large tree, he signalled for Ginny to follow him over, it wasn't until she saw Luna and Hermione with the flowers that she realised what this area was. Ginny looked on with a lump in her throat as the two girls worked around the graves, removing the first of the falling leaves while speaking to their fathers all the time.

"If you want to understand us Ginny then it starts here, when people look at us they see the money and fame, not the price we've paid. My parent's murder made me a Lord at eleven, Xeno's murder saw Luna awarded a fortune and Dan was well insured granting the Grangers financial security. We would give every galleon for just one more day with our loved ones but that's not going to happen so we live our lives as best we can. Just what do you expect of us Ginny?"

"I don't know Harry, I really didn't understand how much I would miss Luna until she was gone, then I find out she's not gone but she still is! I want my friend back Harry, the only girl I had to talk to growing up, but that girl is gone."

"Yes Luna Lovegood is gone, so is Hermione Granger but I think the Potter girls are two of the most wonderful people you're ever likely to meet. We all had to grow up fast and learn to be there for each other, my life didn't begin until I met Luna and Hermione, they are my past, present, future and I couldn't be happier. I will try and answer any of your questions but I will not have my girls being upset, we have 'stuff' Ginny but it's not important to us. The first time I took Luna into London she spied a shirt that she liked in a shop, I bought it for her just to see the joy on her face when she wore it, that's far more important to me than the money I paid for it."

"Harry I never meant to upset Luna, I think I'm just overwhelmed here because you could fit our whole house in that room we had tea this afternoon, I would like the chance to apologise and get to know you all."

“I came from a cupboard to the manor Ginny so I do understand about being overwhelmed, we were unsure about rejoining the magical world and Luna’s friendship with you was one of the deciding factors, maybe that was why she reacted like she did.” Harry held out his hand and a bunch of flowers appeared, “Thanks Cas, Ginny I think you should go over there.”

Ginny took the offered flowers and walked over towards Luna, she laid the flowers on her father’s grave, “Hello Mr Lovegood, it’s Ginny Weasley, I don’t really know what to say to you other than you’ll never have to worry about Luna as she has people who really love and take care of her.” She turned to Hermione, “I’m sorry but I didn’t want to impose by putting flowers on your dad’s grave as I didn’t know him, could you tell me a bit about your dad?”

Harry sat under their tree and smiled as the friendship was reborn, he wondered if the weekend was going to be as hard.

-oOoOo-

Cas fetched Maia to Sirius’s room where he lay on his bed, fully clothed and looking like he’d just been through an emotional nightmare, there was also a strong smell of firewhisky. “Can you fetch me a sobering potion Cas?”

“I’ve already given him one, I don’t know how he made it home in this state!”

Maia sat on the bed and Sirius wrapped his arms tightly around her and sobbed his heart out, it took a good twenty minutes for him to regain some control and composure, since neither had ever seen him shed a tear before they were expecting bad news, they weren’t disappointed.

Sirius began to describe what had happened at the trial, “Snape had admitted he was a death eater and working for Voldemort, he also gave the reason why he tried to murder Harry. He had been promised Harry’s mother as a reward for being a good little death eater but when Lily refused to give up her son, Voldemort murdered her. Snape

hated James, wanted Lily and planned to get his ultimate revenge by ending the Potter line today.

Maia was running her fingers through his hair as he spoke, she'd seen Harry do it with the girls and it appeared to have a calming effect. "What else did they find out and how long did he get in Azkaban?"

"I don't know, I had to leave the chamber and threw-up in the corridor, I went for a few drinks to try and calm my nerves but think I spilt most of it down me as my hands were shaking so bad. Maia this will be all over the papers tomorrow so I need to tell Harry now, I just don't know how I'm going to face him."

"Like we always do Sirius, as a family, Molly and Arthur Weasley are coming to dinner tonight so we'll have to do it before then. Molly may have a heart of gold but she's also opinionated, overbearing and extremely nosey, we could have done without them tonight but we better find Emma and fill her in."

-oOoOo-

The two aurors who were tasked with returning Bellatrix LeStrange to Azkaban had been very cautious and watched her every move, well they would have if she'd made any. The witch had sat there not moving a muscle since boarding the small boat so it came as something of a shock when she spoke, "Please sir, I think I'm going to be sick!"

The auror's were instantly alert, "How come you had no problem on the trip over but feel sick now?"

Bella answered demurely, "I'm sorry sir but they gave me some food so I wouldn't have to take the truth serum on an empty stomach. The food was much richer than the usual fare served in Azkaban and I'm just not used to it." She made a retching motion with her chest and had her hand covering her mouth, one of the aurors drew his wand while the other indicated that she should make her way to the side of

the boat, she struggled to stand and then staggered towards the side before exploding into action.

Her last stagger had taken Bella within range of the auror holding a wand on her, like a striking cobra she snatched the wand out his hand and spun around to face the other, pushing the stolen wand right through his left eyeball and into his brain. She continued her spin three hundred and sixty degrees until she was back facing the first auror, his look of utter disbelief at his wand now protruding from his partners head froze him for the vital second Bella needed to smash her magic inhibiting manacles into his throat and crush his windpipe.

In the space of a few seconds Bella had bested the two dying aurors and she stood there, tall and proud as the wind swept across the deck. She had only the old squib boatman to deal with then she could head for the continent, there was nothing left for her in Britain anymore.

Jack Todd was a squib who loved his boat, he'd been offered the job of becoming the Azkaban ferryman after his wife died and had been plying the route for the last eight years. He'd ferried countless people to and fro in that time but what really scared Jack was Dementors, he'd heard there was a light spell that could protect you from these monsters so Jack had acquired the nearest thing he could think of and prayed he'd never have to find out if it worked.

This was not a scenario he'd ever envisaged and had no idea if this would work either but there was nothing to lose, Jack had no doubts this bitch would kill him just as easily as those two aurors, he may be approaching sixty eight but that didn't mean he was going to go willingly.

Bella glanced at the old squib as her vision became nothing but white and her body tried to cope with the most intense pain she'd ever experienced.

Jack had fired his practically antique Very flare pistol at her and the cartridge appeared to glance off her cheek before lodging in her unkempt mass of hair then sticking to her flesh as it burned, Magnesium flares burn at temperatures in excess of two thousand

degrees Celsius and while still unsure of their effect on Dementors, he could now state with certainty that having one burning next to your head was pretty bloody lethal to witches.

The autopsy couldn't decide whether she died from burning, drowning after having fallen overboard or Jack Todd caving in what was left of her head with his boathook as he 'attempted' to bring the body back on board. The only thing they were sure of was that she was most definitely dead.

-oOoOo-

Albus needed to get out of the infirmary but ever since his bond with Fawkes had been severed he'd felt incredibly weak, that blasted white phoenix had left him feeling like a feeble old man. He was certain that his strength and power would eventually top-up after time but the big questions were was he going to get the time and where would his levels top out at? He'd been drawing power from the phoenix for so long Albus was unsure what his own power level was anymore, one thing was an unfortunate truth he would have to face, at one hundred and fifty seven he wasn't going to be the most powerful wizard in the world anymore.

If he wanted to get out of here Albus was going to have to rely on his wits, rather than his power, with that in mind he'd already performed a switching spell between the sleeping draught Poppy had given him and some of her tea. This would give him a small window of opportunity but at the moment it was all he had, casting a disillusionment charm on himself the instant Poppy's eyes closed he made his way slowly out the infirmary.

The speed Albus was travelling at was not dictated by his need for stealth, rather this was the quickest the old wizard could actually move. He intended to use the secret tunnel between the castle and his brother's pub for his escape, laying low there in the undetectable room built into the basement. This should give him the time needed to recover and, more importantly plan his next moves. The disillusioned old wizard shuffled his way along the corridor, his hand on the wall for support while his mind worked on the puzzle of how to restore his power and fame to that of his glory days.

-oOoOo-

George Goyle stepped onto French soil and felt some of his fear leave him, he'd been in the public gallery today at Bella's trial and the sight of what Azkaban could do to that psychotic witch made all his decisions for him. George felt he'd been living on borrowed time and his past was going to catch up with him eventually, after seeing Bella he was convinced anything was a better alternative than Azkaban. There was also the problem of Snape's impending trial, any competent questioning would reveal his name and then it would be all over.

George had abandoned everything, wife, son and home to get out the country, a visit to Gringotts and all the wealth he possessed was in his pocket. He was well aware that George Goyle was not the most intelligent wizard in the world but, with the choices laid out before him he could really only see one answer, he would need to search for his master and help bring him back.

A/N thanks for reading

Next update will be 'Can't', hopefully next weekend.

FG2 – The Trio Hit Hogwarts

Chapter 7

It was almost time for the Weasleys to show up and Harry was now regretting inviting them, Snape's admissions about his mother had made him feel sick inside and dirty all over, he would also like the chance to cave the bastard's head in with a blunt instrument but was certain Sirius would get there before him.

He was surrounded and supported by his family though, his wives either side of him and even little Danni sensed her big brother needed hugs because she hadn't let him go all evening. Harry had no intention of putting her down, Luna had mentioned Mrs Weasley's habit of hugging anything that didn't move fast enough out of her reach so he had no qualms about using his favourite sister as a human shield, Danni was currently in his arms with both her little arms around his neck as Cas brought Ginny's parents into the manor.

You could practically hear Ginny's back crack in protest as the mother's arms smothered her child, any objection she might have uttered would have been lost anyway since her head was buried in that ample bosom, not that she would have been heard over the noise her mother was making.

"Oh Ginny, I was so worried. Your father told me you were ok but what do men know, you should have come straight back home where I could have fixed you up properly, what were you thinking of? Here let me get a good look at you."

Harry was astonished that the woman had managed to get all that out in one breath, he was none too pleased about the 'properly' remark but let it slide for the moment as Mr Weasley approached him, obviously able to just tune his wife out by now, a skill worth his weight in gold.

"Ah Harry, who is this lovely young lady?"

Danni smiled at the strange man but held on to her brother tighter, "This is my little sis, Danni this is Ginny's father and mother."

The little girl had liked Ginny instantly so smiled at her father, Molly looked ready to inform everyone that Danni couldn't be Harry's sister when her daughter grabbed her by the arm, "Harry is it ok if I show my mother where I'll be staying?"

She hardly waited for his answer before dragging her mother out of there, Ginny had unintentionally caused one scene today so she was in no mood to let her mother create any more, not if she had anything to do with it.

As the Weasley woman left, Sirius asked the question that they all wanted to know the answer to, "Arthur what happened at the trial today?"

Arthur hesitated before deciding it would be all over the papers tomorrow anyway, "Snape never made it out the Wizengamot chamber, he was kissed by a Dementor directly after questioning but not before several arrest warrants were issued, and one was for Dumbledore. Apparently he was aware of Harry's treatment at the hands of his relatives but wanted him kept demure and pliable so he would do as Albus wished, he was also too busy spending your money to interfere. Snape reported that Albus was aware you were innocent Sirius; Snape certainly knew you were no death eater and thought it was all a great joke. They will also be questioning the old man about Maia's attempted murder so I think he will be at least changing accommodation for one that has bars on the windows."

The spike of anger that went through the group was tempered by the fact that justice was finally being done, Snape was gone for good and Dumbledore wouldn't be far behind him. The group headed through to the dining room while awaiting the return of the missing Weasley's, they might have a wait on their hands.

Molly was mesmerised by 'Ginny's room' and her daughter used this to her advantage, "Mum I want you to be on your best behaviour tonight, we've had a hard day and the trial on top, my friends don't

need any more hassle, they just want a nice pleasant dinner and that's what they're going to get."

"Ginny what is all this stuff?"

"It's mine mother and don't even think about starting on me, I had it out with them today and it almost cost me my friends. They're not trying to buy my friendship here mum, Merlin people would pay money to be in the position I'm in. Little Ginny Weasley is spending the weekend with the Potters, Susan Bones and Neville Longbottom, can you believe that because I can't! Sirius Black bought a brand new broom for the little girl who noticed a pet rat had a toe missing, they didn't even know it was me until I mentioned it, I was out flying with it this afternoon and it's wonderful. I'm invited to Hermione's birthday party in a few weeks and will be meeting their muggle friends as well, please don't spoil this for me mum."

"But Ginny how can we accept all this?"

"You have to mother because that's who these people are, their elf noticed the condition of my clothes after the attack and just went out and bought me new ones. This is the way they live, money means nothing to them but family and friends are everything. Both Luna and Hermione's fathers are buried on the grounds, they go up there all the time to lay flowers and talk to them, mum it breaks your heart to watch. They've lost so much and been hurt so bad yet came through it as really lovely people, if Luna or Hedwig had been a second slower today then Harry would be dead, what's stuff compared to that mum?" Ginny was now crying as Harry's chat played heavily on her mind, things may be nice but friends and family were much more important.

Molly held her crying daughter as she resolved to do her best, Ginny really wanted this and all it was going to cost her was some teeth marks on her tongue as she tried to stop her mouth running away with her. One thing still bothered her though, "Ginny, how come Ron isn't invited?"

She was wiping her tears as she tried to think of a good way of putting this, problem is there just wasn't, "Probably because every time he opens his mouth he insults them, even greeting the Potters this morning he insulted Luna so bad Hermione warned him to stay away from them. Please don't spoil it for the three of us because Ron's an idiot, the twins would probably throw him off a tower as they're desperate to come here and meet their heroes."

"Was he really that bad, what did he actually do?"

Ginny took a deep breath, "Well first he insulted them in front of the entire great hall for being sorted into Hufflepuff, then threw a hissy fit over my new broom and said they were bloody mental before today calling Luna loony!"

Molly was astonished, "But the Potters have hardly been in Hogwarts, how the hell did he manage all that?"

"When it comes to being a prat, Ron is just naturally gifted." Ginny walked into her bathroom to wash her face and Molly was stunned into silence as she followed on behind, the opulence here was beyond anything she'd ever seen. There was no way she could deny her daughter this, Ron had dug himself into a hole and it would be up to him to get himself out.

Dinner was actually very pleasant and they'd been joined by Remus who kept everybody's spirits up, Molly though at least wanted to warn them what they were letting themselves in for by having the twins here over the weekend. A few stories of their exploits and everyone was laughing, not the reaction she expected.

"What do you think Padfoot, would they give us a run for our money?" asked Remus only to be interrupted by an excited Ginny.

"Your Padfoot?" a nod led to the next question, "Who are the rest of the marauders then?"

"Remus here is Moony and Harry's dad was Prongs!"

Ginny then unfortunately brought the whole mood crashing down, "Who was Wormtail then Sirius?"

The resulting silence was broken by Luna, "Wormtail was a rat with a missing toe, a rat who gave my husband's parents to Voldemort and then had Sirius in Azkaban for seven years. For obvious reasons Ginny we don't mention his name in this house."

Since the mood was already down, Molly broached the subject that had been eating away at her all night, "Harry I really must object to you buying Ginny so many things."

Both his wives were attempting to calm him over their bond as Harry tried to find a civil way of saying this, "Mrs Weasley, tonight you attended as my guest and brought a pie as a gift, supposing I had said we didn't want it and told you to take it back home with you, how would you feel about that?"

Molly could see where this was going and tried to head him off, "But Harry it's only a pie, there's no comparison."

"I couldn't agree with you more, you grew and picked the fruit, made the pastry and baked the pie yourself– the pie was also delicious by the way, that's much more important than some things we bought your daughter. As saw Ginny's clothes were ruined, purely because she was our friend, and went out and bought her more. Do we have money, yes – do we throw that fact in people's faces, no! If you have a problem with that then I'm sorry because we have no intention of changing for anyone."

Ginny ran from the room crying, followed by Luna and Hermione who went to check on her, Arthur Weasley was raging at his wife, "Harry I apologise for any criticism of your hospitality, you have treated my daughter impeccably and hope you don't hold this against her."

Molly knew she'd put her foot in it big time, especially since Ginny had specifically asked her not to bring the subject up, "I'm sorry Harry, it was just seeing her with all those things we couldn't afford to buy her..."

Harry interrupted her, he really didn't need this tonight. "Mrs Weasley, as I told Ginny earlier I spent seven years living in a cupboard so I know this can be overwhelming but it's nothing compared to the people sitting round this table. A smile and a hug from Danni or my wives goodnight kisses are more precious than a vault of gold..."

Hermione and Luna had come running back as they could feel Harry's angst, they were just in time to see the large dish of potato salad shoot off the table and smack Molly Weasley square in the face. All eyes turned towards little Danni who was sitting there in her high chair, with her little fists clenched and staring daggers at the person who'd upset her Harry. As the rest of the dishes began to twitch Harry scooped the toddler up into his arms and whispered calmly in her ear.

Arthur looked at his stunned wife with large dollops of lumpy white goo dripping off her face, there was only one thing that came to his mind, "At least it wasn't a chair love," he then collapsed in uncontrollable laughter, quickly followed by everyone else except Molly, she failed to see the funny side of this.

Maia took Molly to get cleaned up while the girls went back to collect Ginny, Sirius meanwhile broke out the brandy for the adults as Emma tried in vain to take Danni from Harry. The little tyke was having none of it though Harry did get her to say sorry to Molly when she came back in.

Molly was astonished that someone that young could use magic but didn't need a crystal ball to determine that when Ginny came back in the room she wouldn't even look in her direction, the senior Weasley's left soon after their daughter returned.

Danni again wanted Harry to put her to bed and her sisters to read for her so Ginny tagged along.

Remus left the three of them sitting finishing off their brandies in front of the fire, "I can't believe our little Danni is so powerful a witch, what's she going to be like when she gets a wand in her hand?" Maia was shuddering at the thought.

Emma was chuckling, "I can't believe how accurate she is, her aim was dead centre of that poor woman's face."

"That poor woman will think twice before upsetting our Harry again, Danni should probably be nominated for an order of Merlin, anyone who can shut Molly Weasley up that effectively certainly deserves one in my book." Both women were now giggling.

"Arthur was right about one thing though," added Sirius, "She was lucky it wasn't a chair, that bloody hurt!"

"Aw the poor baby!" Sirius thought this might earn him a sympathetic kiss or two, instead both women hit him over the head with cushions before rolling about with laughter, the old Black charm was going to need some serious polishing before Saturday.

-oOoOo-

Breakfast that morning was a happier affair; Rita had concentrated the story on Snape's deeds and Dumbledore's disappearance from the Hogwarts infirmary, the self-elected 'leader of the light' was now the most wanted man in Britain. There was no mention of the murdering bastard's intention towards Lily Potter for which they would be eternally grateful, giving Rita that interview had just paid an unexpected dividend. The story that Bellatrix Lestrange had murdered two aurors before being killed while trying to escape had been relegated to the bottom corner of the page

Ginny was trying not to feel self conscious about sitting there dressed from head to toe in new clothes, she'd had new robes for attending Hogwarts but the complete wardrobe Cas had supplied her with yesterday wouldn't even fit in her room at the Burrow.

Little Danni gave them all a hug before they left, Ginny was the latest addition to the 'wrapped around her little finger' club.

They appeared in the great hall and were immediately set upon by redheaded Gryffindors;

“Ginny are you ok?”

“Looking good for a corpse sis!”

“Why didn’t you let us know what happened?”

“Where did you get even more new clothes?”

“Look guys I’m fine, dad was with me in the infirmary and ministry, both he and mum had dinner with us last night, if you have a problem with not knowing Percy, then take it to them, Ron – go away!”

George worked it out in a flash, “Did you get to meet the marauders?”

“Yes I had dinner with two of them.”

Fred headed back to the Gryffindor table and returned dragging Oliver Wood, “Ollie you either cancel this practice on Saturday or you can find yourself a couple of new beaters, we can’t miss this opportunity.”

For some reason the twins always brought a smile to Harry’s face and he really wanted to see what happened when they got together with Remus and Sirius, it should be a riot. “Guys, what’s the problem here, maybe we can help?”

George explained the problem, “Our illustrious team captain here has booked Quidditch practice for Saturday morning.”

“Yeah but some of us have important places to be on Saturday morning.”

The trio had a quick conversation over their bond before Harry offered a solution, “Oliver in the muggle world sports teams arrange what’s called a pre-season friendly or tune-up games. This gives you a chance to get your team ready for the season by playing an actual match, I think we can put a team together to give you a game on Saturday morning on our pitch at Potter Manor, hold on a sec – hey Nym, can you play in goals Saturday morning?”

“Yeah sure Harry, will probably stay over Friday night, just keep me away from that blue hedgehog or I won’t get my homework done.”

Nym’s addiction to Sonic was a running gag in the house, Harry then laid out his plans to the Gryffindors, “Nym in goals, we three as chasers, Ginny looked great on her new broom so she can be our seeker while I’m sure the marauders would love a shot at being beaters against you guys.”

Both twins eyes twinkled like Christmas tree lights, George had his palm over Oliver’s mouth while Fred’s hand was on his captain’s head, forcing it to nod in agreement.

“Excellent idea old bean.”

“Truly spiffing suggestion, actually can’t wait.”

The twin’s attempts at imitating their captain’s voice was so over the top that even Oliver was trying to laugh, they did have the curtesy to pull him to the side and try to explain.

“Sorry about that but this is really important to us.”

“Yeah and look at the bright side Ollie, if Ginny’s any good we’ve got a replacement for McLaggen.”

“She would need to be pretty bad to be worse than Cormac McLaggen!”

Oliver knew when he was beaten and the Potter kid’s idea was a good one, “Ok guys, you win but I need to run it passed McGonagall first.”

Two very happy Weasley boys made their way to class while their younger brother was perfecting his ‘volcano about to erupt’ look, not only did his sister get new clothes and a new broom but was now going to play seeker on the Potter’s own pitch. It was time for a letter home to mum extolling the injustices visited down upon him, why

should he be missing out on all the fun and goodies when the other three were getting them.

-oOoOo-

Ginny and Hermione sat together in charms but she was struggling to get her feather to move, she looked on longingly as her friends feathers chased one another around the classroom. "Hermione am I not saying it right? I can't get this to move at all."

Hermione saw professor Flitwick was making his way around the classroom, he was obviously leaving them till last as their feathers had shot into the air the instant he asked. "Ginny we don't use Wingardium Leviosa or silly wand waving, you're a witch so just tell your magic what you want it to do. Think about Danni, she can't even pronounce that phrase and hasn't a wand but still levitated potato salad all over your mother's head."

Ginny had no idea what Hermione meant so the Hufflepuff decided to teach her, "Magic flows through your body but normally you don't notice it, we have the benefit of being bonded which ties us into the other pair's magic as well so we feel it all the time. Cast a light spell then I will use a charm that deprives you of your senses for about ten seconds, don't panic and you'll feel your heart beating and magic flowing."

Ginny nodded and cast lumos before the lights went out, she couldn't hear or feel anything either, she was floating in silent darkness before the pulse from her heart almost gave her a fright. She felt something within herself rise up to meet that fright and realised this must be what Hermione was talking about, she could feel it like water in a hose just waiting on the nozzle being turned on. Ginny felt it flow towards a point and it dawned on her that this was her magic powering the lumos spell, she watched it closely before it was gone. Ginny was suddenly returned to brightness with Hermione peering at her closely, "Are you ok, did you find it?"

"I'm not sure, I found something though but have no idea what to do with it."

“It’s like a little puppy that you have to train to be your life long companion, ready to do your bidding whether it’s a Jack Russell terrier or a Great Dane.”

“Not helping Hermione, we never had a dog.”

“Point your wand at the feather and tell your magic what you want it to do.”

Ginny pointed her wand and attempted to concentrate on what she felt, a bright flash later left an incinerated feather and two girls with soot on their faces, “Eh Ginny, were you trying to float or fry that feather? You have to show your magic who’s the boss, bend it to your will.”

By the end of the lesson Ginny’s new feather was floating a few inches above the bench, she may have had sweat dripping off her forehead but her smile was wide and genuine. Filius Flitwick was flabbergasted, he’d watched the three Potters float their feathers effortlessly and silently which had impressed the hell out of him, now he found out it wasn’t silent casting but working without structured spells.

He’d closely monitored the Weasley situation without interfering because he was as anxious as Lady Hermione to see the little Gryffindor succeed, with her insight and Ginny’s tenacity they’d pulled off an achievement that Filius didn’t discover, far less acquire until he was a second year apprentice under a charms master. The accepted code of learning was that this feat was beyond the vast majority of witches and wizards and shouldn’t be taught, so they were given structured wand movements and specific words to assist in achieving similar results, perhaps it was time to re-examine the way they teach magic! The excited professor could hardly wait to tell Minerva and she’d be so disappointed her class was cancelled yesterday, if they were using that method to perform charms then it was a given they would use the same technique in transfiguration.

Ginny was bouncing in the corridor as they left the class, “Luna, Harry did you see me, isn’t Hermione fantastic?”

Harry was chuckling as they made their way along the corridor, "That would be a yes to both of those questions Ginny, but you have to be careful. When you start using magic this way it can leave you exhausted so it's very important not to overdo it." They chatted away as they waited for Hermione to return from the toilet before the group entered the great hall, only to find quite a few other people occupying the staff table, the Potters decided to stick around for the announcements that were obviously coming.

-oOoOo-

Minerva saw her friend Filius enter with a massive grin on his face and was looking forward to discovering the reason for it, she could do with being cheered up after the morning she'd just had. She shouldn't really complain though as Amelia and Augusta had bullied the minister into solving most of her problems so he could at least be seen to be doing something.

Augusta walked towards the podium and the hall fell silent, "As you all know, the former headmaster of this establishment is now a wanted man in connection with some very serious crimes. Since Hogwarts started this week its students have been acutely disadvantaged by some members of staff leaving or even attacking students, I'm here to tell you that all stops today and Monday will see a new, improved Hogwarts under the leadership of its current headmistress Minerva McGonagall."

Minerva walked forward to tremendous applause, "Thank you everyone but I have a few announcements to make here so if you'll bear with me I'll get through them as quickly as possible. Professor Pomona Sprout is the new deputy headmaster of Hogwarts." This again was greeted by warm applause.

"The ministry have acted to ensure Hogwarts is safe for all students therefore we will have four aurors assuming positions here for the rest of the school year. Senior auror Kingsley Shacklebolt is our new defence professor and head of Slytherin, Auror John Williamson is our new potions professor, auror Edwin Proudfoot will be taking over the vacant muggle studies post, senior auror Gawain Robards will be

assuming most of the administration duties concerned with running the school to allow me to continue teaching although Professor Sinistra will be taking over as Head of Gryffindor. All positions come into effect Monday morning.”

Each auror had stood as their name was mentioned to be greeted with polite applause, the Slytherins eyed their new head of house warily with comments of this new Hogwarts ringing in their ears while the Gryffindors were delighted with the appointment of McGonagall as headmistress.

When the students settled back down to lunch, the Potters arranged for their weekend guests to be in the entrance hall at five o'clock. Hedwig had just flashed the Potters home when Ginny informed her brothers why Wormtail wasn't mentioned in the Potter house.

Susan as usual was sitting with Hannah eating lunch when she felt someone slide into the space beside her, “Miss Bones, do you mind if I speak to you for a few moments?”

Susan turned her head to see the wizard who was making frequent guest appearances in her better dreams actually speaking to her, she could only nod in agreement because if she opened her mouth to speak ‘I love you Cedric!’ or other such nonsense was likely to come out.

“I heard through the grape vine that you were spending the weekend with the Potters, now that there's a Quidditch match involved I was wondering if you could do something for me?”

The young witch almost answered that she would do anything for him before common sense once more took hold, Susan thought she knew what Cedric was going to ask and was disappointed in him, did her hansom idol have feet of clay? “Cedric I'm sorry but I couldn't spy on the Gryffindor team, that would be abusing Harry's hospitality.”

Cedric smiled at her and at that moment she would have done whatever he wanted, “I wouldn't ask you to do that, we have four puffs playing in that match and what I wanted was for you to let me know if any of them are any good. The whole school knows our team

is rubbish and I'm desperate enough to try anything, will you help me please?"

Now exposed to the full force of the Cedric charm there wasn't a snowball's chance in hell she would say no.

"Oh Susan you're an angel, I can't thank you enough for this, we will talk again on Monday when you get back."

Hannah had to help her friend get through the rest of the day, taking her by the arm and leading the poor witch in the right direction. Not only had Cedric spoke to her but called her an angel and was going to see her again on Monday, this was too much for Susan's hormones to cope with. She walked about in a daze, smiling at everyone for the rest of the afternoon.

-oOoOo-

The twins were first down, bag in hand and broom over shoulder, they were soon joined by Neville and Susan, both with bags but no brooms. Nym sauntered down with her hands in her pockets, "Travelling light Tonks?" joked Susan.

Nym just shrugged, "I've got my own room at the manor, during the holidays I'm there more than I'm at home, we even go on holiday together."

Susan hadn't put that bit of information together, "You knew where he was, even when he didn't show up last year and didn't say anything?"

"There was no doubt in my mind that all three of them would be going into Hufflepuff because they are very trusting and loyal, if you want to be friends with them I suggest you don't break that trust. They are my family and I will always have their back, I stopped Draco that night because had he actually managed to hurt one of them the other two would have destroyed him. Sirius Black was in auror training and Remus Lupin is an expert in defence but the three Potters kick both their arses at once every Sunday when they're practicing duelling. You'll have a great weekend at Potter Manor but come back and blab

about them all over the castle and chances are you won't have a second one!"

Ginny was last to join the group and also had no bag, this got a chuckle from Nym, "Let me guess, you've got a room and Cas went shopping for you!"

Ginny nodded but asked a question with her surprised expression, "Cas loves to shop, Harry's mother taught her how and she has impeccable taste. Harry would never deny her anything that makes her happy, that elf is like a third mother to them. Every time I go there I find more clothes in my closet but it's not like Harry can't afford it so I stopped worrying about it ages ago."

Neville was confused, "Cas is a house elf?"

It was Ginny who answered him, "Cas is amazing, she stuck Dumbledore to the infirmary ceiling and wanted to drop him off the astronomy tower for what he did to Harry."

Neville was now worried, "Elves shouldn't be able to do that!"

Nym laughed as she pictured the scene in her head, "Elves shouldn't be able to shop in Harrods either but Cas gets preferential treatment the minute she steps in the door, she's there at least once a week."

The elf in question appeared in human disguise with Dobby by her side, "Nym, Ginny, so you must be Miss Susan?"

Susan could only nod, "Right Dobby, you take the boys and I'll get the girls and meet you in the lounge." The three girls held on to her arms and they were gone, leaving a pair of twins gawking.

"Who was that Dobby?" George asked.

"That was Miss Cas young sirs, you don't want to get on the wrong side of Miss Cas, that is not a good place to be sirs."

The three stood there shocked that they had almost been drooling over an elf before Fred burst out laughing, "We've just been pranked and we haven't even got there yet, Brilliant!"

-oOoOo-

The twins were wiping the tears out their eyes while at the same time trying to take notes of some of these pranks they were watching, both had sore ribs from laughing so much since they got here.

After they arrived Dobby showed them into this amazing bedroom and they were still standing on the same spot looking at it when there sister found them five minutes later.

"Guys, it's only a room, just relax and be yourselves. This is just the way they live, Mums eyeballs nearly landed on the carpet when she saw my room but don't let it throw you. It took me a little while and Harry having a talk with me but they're really nice people who're looking for friends."

Fred pulled his little sister into a hug, "When did you get so wise and how come none of that rubbed off on Ron?"

George rubbed the top of her head, just to remind her she was the little sis, "Ok Gin but can I just say fourteen wow's, six oh Merlin's and a couple of hip hip hooray's first!"

Ginny couldn't hide her amusement, "Oh so you haven't seen the bathroom yet?"

"We've got our own bathroom?" two voices asked as one before diving towards the door a laughing Ginny pointed to.

"Ok guys, lets get back down to the lounge, Hermione said they just relax on a Friday night, play some games and watch something called a movie. Tomorrow we've got the Quidditch match, potions lessons with Maia and then Emma's taking us all bowling tomorrow night."

They headed out as George remarked, "Beats the hell out of sitting in the Gryffindor common room."

The five purebloods were introduced to Sonic with Neville and the Weasleys spellbound as they watched the blue hedgehog collect gold rings under Susan's erratic control while Nym shouted instructions in her ear. The marauders met the Weasley twins over dinner and Minerva McGonagall's hair would have instantly turned white if she'd heard the half of what they were talking about, the rest of the table were in stitches of laughter as the two sets of pranksters seemed to compete to see how many people they could get to choke on their dinner at the same time.

It was Nym's turn to choose the movie and all the questions coming from the purebloods dried up as laughter again overtook them, someone getting hit in the face with a tin of paint is funny in any language as Macaulay Culkin was left home alone.

When the man's hat went on fire both twins imagined the same thing happening to McGonagall as she walked about her classroom, still teaching and totally unaware of events, it would be extremely funny but neither was stupid enough to attempt it though.

Remus and Sirius had almost been in tears when they presented the marauders map to its rightful owners earlier and the twins were promised some books of their best pranks in return, both were very happy with the exchange.

It was turning out to be a great weekend and just what the Potters needed after such a stressful introduction to Hogwarts.

-oOoOo-

Albus Dumbledore was not having a great time, despite achieving his ambition of being the most famous and talked about wizard in Britain once more. Unfortunately all the pictures of him now plastered everywhere had a big WANTED sign below his face, at least they said he was still very dangerous though Albus didn't think he could defeat a Doxy right now.

His magical power was all over the place at the moment, he would feel it return to a reasonable level only for it to dissipate like mist the instant he tried to use it. It was as if the container was cracked and he could only hope it repaired itself soon, lying on a folding cot in his brother's basement room was not how he planned to spend his later years. He had some money squirreled away in his cottage in Glengarry but at the moment he wasn't fit enough to travel there.

Albus originally thought he would be here for a few days to recuperate and then flee the country for warmer shores; it was now looking like weeks rather than days he was going to have to spend in a room that was barely more than a cell. The tired old wizard hoped that wasn't an omen as he once more drifted off into a fitful sleep.

A/N Thanks for reading

My next post will be FG2 - Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Susan had a dilemma on her hands, the astonishingly hansom boy who made her knees wobble just by looking in her direction had asked for help, but Nym had explained quite clearly what giving that help might cost her. She was unwilling to chance losing her three new friends but Susan knew if Cedric smiled at her like that again she'd tell him what colour of underwear she had on and anything else he wanted to know.

She was sitting with Neville watching a fascinating match unfold in front of their eyes, the Gryffindor chasers were a really tight unit who flew with military precision and had countless tactical formations in their arsenal, the three girls were a formidable force. The Potters on the other hand didn't use any recognisable formation whatsoever, they were more like an organic organism who appeared to be everywhere at once and each member always knew exactly where their two partners were.

Oliver was attempting every strategy he knew to try and counter what the Potters were doing but there was a glaringly obvious, though fatal flaw in his plans, he hadn't a clue what the Potters were doing or how they were carrying it off.

The score had remained fairly even but that was down purely to the keepers, not that Nym wasn't very good but Woods was brilliant, he was easily the busier of the two keepers but this just seemed to inspire him to pull off a string of amazing saves.

The beaters weren't a factor in this game as the Weasley twins were hardly likely to fire bludgers at their baby sister and the opposition chasers were their hosts for the weekend, they had a whole different competition going on with the marauders where they were smashing the balls at each other with incredible force and loving every minute of it.

With the teams evenly balanced the match would probably be decided by the seekers and here there was no contest, in a challenge that required grace, speed and agility, it was like a rhino trying to compete with a swallow, Ginny Weasley was born to fly.

As Ginny got better acquainted with her new broom, and began to loose her nerves over playing a proper Quidditch match for the first time, it became crystal clear the only way McLaggen was going to catch the snitch was if it flew into his mouth. He couldn't use his superior weight and size to bully the little redhead because both her brothers had warned him before the match that this was a friendly and, should he damage one hair of her head, he would become best friends with their beater bats.

Susan glanced around at the two mothers sitting watching with little Danni and had a brainwave, her Aunt Amelia had always taught her never to be afraid to ask for help.

Emma watched as the strawberry blond approached, you could see something was troubling her from twenty feet away, "How can we help you Susan?"

She tried valiantly not to blush as she explained the situation, "Our house Quidditch captain asked me to inform him if any of the Hufflepuffs playing here today were capable of making the team, well Nym is very good but Harry, Luna and Hermione are fantastic! The problem is that when Cedric find's out he's going to be all over them to play in the Hufflepuff team."

"And you're wondering if you should lie to this Cedric?" asked Maia.

Any pretence of hiding her blushing evaporated, "I don't think I could lie to Cedric ma'am."

Both women tried not to smile as the situation became clear to them, Susan's crush couldn't have been any clearer if she'd rented a billboard to display it for the world to see. Maia attempted a solution, "Susan I suggest we talk to them about it, let them at least be forewarned of the situation. I think it may do them some good as I know they enjoy sports with their other friends, Luna was the strongest voice against going to Hogwarts so if you can convince her the other two will go along."

Just at that McLaggen spotted the snitch, he was speeding towards it when the much lighter Weasley, riding the faster broom and diving at a steeper angle, passed him as if he was standing still, Ginny grabbed the snitch and Gryffindor had lost, again!

Cas and Dobby arrived with refreshments as Ziggy stowed away all the gear and put their brooms back on the racks. Both teams were buzzing after the game, with the exception of Cormac who was certain he'd just been beaten by his replacement. Even Oliver was delighted, he couldn't remember the last time he'd had a workout like that, his chasers had played superb and a fellow Gryffindor, who even had a Nimbus two thousand of her own, had beaten their seeker.

This was a much better outcome than they would have achieved through a normal practice and with the added bonus of no Slytherins around to watch their every move. Oliver's first port of call when he returned to Hogwarts would be Professor Sinistra's office requesting permission for a first year to play on the team, he was pretty confident of the result as the worst the new head of house would do was to say she had to get the headmistresses permission, there was no way McGonagall was going to deny Gryffindor a fabulous new seeker.

Harry was talking with Oliver, Neville and Cormac while the twins never moved far from the marauders all morning, what was making Harry's face go red though was all the girls were sitting in a big group chatting and the topics being discussed were not something the young boy wanted to be party to, unfortunately their bond didn't have a mute button on it. He perked up though with Susan's comment, "Luna and Hermione, you were great up there and the three of you would easily make the Hufflepuff team, Nym would breeze onto the team too."

Luna wasn't convinced, "We enjoy flying but that's the first time we've ever played a real game, Monday takes us back to our normal school so I doubt we would even have the time to spare."

Alicia Spinnet was struggling to believe Luna for a few reasons, "You mean to say you flew rings around us in your first ever match but don't want to play Quidditch? Why would you want to attend two schools?"

“Our intention is to take our qualifications in both worlds, this will give us the ability to further our education in either world, personally I think I would prefer a muggle university studying some branch of science.”

Katie Bell let out a low whistle, “That’s a tall order, I will be delighted with just passing my NEWTs. Do you want to rule out Quidditch this early though?”

Nym agreed with Luna, “I’m sitting my NEWTs this year so don’t think I would have time for Quidditch either but I certainly couldn’t cope with their workload, these three are top of all their classes in muggle school and I’m willing to bet they’ll do the same in Hogwarts.”

It was an embarrassed Hermione who answered for the trio, “Sorry but we just wouldn’t have the time, we have potions this afternoon, defence tomorrow and expect double the homework from attending two schools. None of us have any ambitions of a career in Quidditch so it wouldn’t really be fair to take the place of someone who does.”

Susan looked crestfallen, “Cedric is going to be so disappointed at having all that Quidditch talent in Hufflepuff and not being able to put it on the pitch.”

Luna, with a totally straight face, gave their new friend some advice, “Well Susan this would be the perfect opportunity for you to console him.”

Her hair colour might have been classed as strawberry blond but her face was now cherry red as a chuckling Angelina Johnson put her arm around the young Hufflepuff, “Never mind Susan, half the witches in Hogwarts would like to console Cedric Diggory.”

Susan glared at the girl, “Is that supposed to cheer me up?”

The four boys had their conversation interrupted by all the giggling coming from the eight girls after Susan’s question.

-oOoOo-

Neville couldn't believe how much he was enjoying a potions lesson though, come to think of it, this was the first potions lesson he'd had as Maia Lovegood actually taught the subject. They started in the greenhouses and garden as she explained what the ingredients were, how to pick and prepare them plus how each ingredient interacted with the others, he and Susan learned more in one afternoon than an entire year with that monster Snape.

Her instructions were so clear and precise that even Ginny was having little problem completing the potion yet so informative that the twins, with three years of potions already under their belts, were still picking up things they didn't know. Maia had them all working on making the same potion so she could assess their skill level and everyone had very quickly decided that it didn't matter how good Professor Williamson was at teaching potions, they would be taking lessons with Maia as long as they were on offer.

-oOoOo-

The people carrier (van) had clever expansion charms on the inside that easily held the whole group with Emma driving and Cas with Danni strapped into her car seat sitting in the front. The plan called for pizza, a couple of games of bowling and some time in the arcade before heading home.

The plan was working perfectly, with everyone having a great time until someone shouted at Harry, "Hey Potter, still as bad at this game? I could give you a few lessons you know."

"Well Dawson if you ever manage to beat me I might take you up on it!" both boys started laughing as 'Dawson' shouted over the rest of his group, Luna quickly and quietly explained the situation to the Hogwarts contingent, "These are some of our friends from school, just relax and don't call Hermione or me Potter, we'll fill you in later."

Harry and Hermione arrived with a group of friends and handled the introductions, "This is Matt Dawson, the boy who only thinks he can play ten-pin bowling, Jamie, Jillian, Claire and Donna, we all go to school together."

Matt indicated the scoreboard, "Looks like someone has lost their touch, even Donna could beat that score!" This earned the boy a dig in the ribs from Donna.

"Yeah but we have some newbie's here tonight and, unlike you, I didn't think showing off was going to be the best way to introduce them to the game."

In a voice dripping with mock sarcasm Claire couldn't resist having a comment, "Oh Harry how could you say such a thing you beast, our Matt would never do something like that."

Jillian's whole face had lit up at the sight of Harry but fell slightly at the prospects of another two girls competing for his affections, her crush might not have been of Susan's proportions but it was pretty close. She was a lovely looking girl with long jet-black hair and deep blue eyes, Jillian was indicating that hair as she pretend pouted to Harry, "we leave you alone for the summer and you add strawberry blond and red to your collection, When are you going to bring some Raven into the mix?"

Ginny sat and watched as this girl joked with Harry, though if he'd given her the slightest encouragement she would be all over him like a rash. Ginny was struggling to understand the situation when Luna's remark hit her like a slap, 'don't call Hermione or me Potter,' these friends obviously didn't know they were married but also appeared to think they were nothing more than good friends. She also couldn't help but notice how easily they slipped into their roles and appeared a lot more relaxed and comfortable around these people than they had at anytime since she met them on the train. The way Harry extracted himself from what was nothing less than a proposition also showed that he was quite practiced at the art, Cas and Emma's timing also helped.

"Jillian you know there's only one girl for me, and here she comes now." Both Cas and Emma walked over holding Danni's hands as the toddler headed straight for Harry, her instincts to protect her big brother extended to other females as well.

The three girls all made a fuss of Danni before Hermione reclaimed her sister, Matt and Jamie wanted a quick word with Harry and pulled him to the side.

“You do know its Jillian’s birthday next week?” asked Matt.

“Of course I do, it’s the week before Hermione’s so quite easy to remember.”

Jamie shook his head in wonder, “Harry for a smart guy you can be quite dense sometimes, don’t you see the signals that girl is putting out, she fancies you something rotten and you just ignore it.”

“Guys I’m not dense and I’m not ignoring her, in fact I’m trying to discourage her!”

Matt looked shocked, “Why the hell would you want to do that?”

“I like Jillian but only as a friend, nothing more, when I decide to date it will be between the lovely young ladies who live with me, I’m afraid no one else will ever come close. Try and tell her that for me please!”

Matt’s mum was picking them up so they had to leave, promising they could all catch up on Monday.

After they left Harry apologised to their friends from Hogwarts, “Sorry about that guys, I should have considered that some of our friends might have been here. I was just waiting on Susan and Ginny being asked if they preferred New Kids on the Block or Boyz II Men.”

Nym was laughing as she informed the bemused Hogwarts students that they were the names of muggle pop bands, “Harry, they’re nowhere near ready and would stick out like a sore thumb, its Hermione’s night remember, I wouldn’t want her to spend it worrying.”

Harry reluctantly agreed, “We’re having a birthday party for Hermione in a fortnight with all our muggle friends,” Ginny’s face fell though she

knew Nym was right, she would be uncomfortable all evening while they would worry about her saying the wrong thing, “but on the Saturday morning we’re heading to our beach house in Florida where we will have a party that night on the sand and we’d like you all to come.”

“We’re going to have a party on a beach?” asked Susan.

“Won’t it be cold?” Neville was hopping he wouldn’t have to wear swimming trunks.

George felt like a fool but had to ask, “Where’s Florida?”

Hermione had the answers, “Florida is on the east coast of America and has a really lovely climate, we have our own private piece of beach and it will be about seventy degrees. Is that ok for everyone?” She was watching Ginny when asking the question as she’d originally hoped the witch could attend her other party as well, the young redhead’s beaming smile confirmed she was happy with that.

“Now all we have to do is make sure Sirius leaves that bloody guitar at home,” Nym said.

-oOoOo-

Sirius at the moment was sweating buckets trying to understand how this date was deteriorating into a disaster, Maia took his hand at the table and he feared the worse, dumped before dessert was something that had never happened to him before.

“Listen Sirius if I wanted to date a stranger then I don’t think I would be too presumptuous in assuming I could have gotten a few offers, stop trying to be someone you’re not and bloody relax or I’ll set Danni on you when we get home.”

Sirius had his first genuine laugh of the night, “That’s better, we all got thrown together three years ago for the sake of the kids but if this relationship is going to go any further I need to know if we can have a life together outside that. When the kids grow up I don’t want the two

of us left sitting there, looking at each other with nothing to say because our only topics of conversation have flown the nest.”

“Your right Maia, I’ve been trying so hard to be perfect for you tonight that I forgot I already am!”

She couldn’t help but laugh, “Now that’s the Sirius Black I know and love, lose the other asshole because him I didn’t like, and we can start this date again. You are getting a goodnight kiss at the end of this, nothing more so let’s just relax and enjoy each other’s company.”

At the end of the night Sirius discovered that there were goodnight kisses and then there were goodnight kisses that said ‘thanks for a wonderful evening and I really want to do this again – soon!’ Maia could have been issued a patent on the second variety because Sirius had certainly never come across anything like them before.

-oOoOo-

Ginny was getting ready for bed when there was a tentative knock on her bedroom door, she opened it to find a nervous Luna standing there, “Can I come in for a chat?”

She moved aside and both girls eventually ended up sitting side by side on the bed, “Ginny, I’ve treated you really badly and I’ve come here tonight hoping you’ll accept my apology.”

“Luna I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“It wasn’t until tonight at the bowling that it hit me, our other friends can’t know we’re magical, can’t know we’re married and don’t even know we’re together. You on the other hand thought I was dead for three years yet, when you can’t immediately accept my new situation, I blow up at you and then set Hermione and Harry off as well, can you possibly forgive me?”

Ginny put her arm round her friend’s shoulders, “Luna you almost lost your husband that morning, I would have been a basket case so in

the circumstances I thought you coped quite well, I'll need to write home and apologise to my mother for snubbing her when all she was doing was trying to look out for me."

"Yeah Harry feels quite bad about jumping down her throat as well, we'll have to try and make it up to her somehow."

"Well she did ask me about Ron..."

"Harry doesn't feel that bad Ginny, Ron's better staying away from us for a while. We're a bit like you must have felt tonight, out of our depth in the magical world and Ron throwing about insults is likely to get him a sore face."

Ginny couldn't really disagree, "Speaking of sore faces, how did that Jillian girl escape without getting one from you or Hermione, if Harry was mine she'd have been wearing a bat-boggy hex for that remark."

"Jillian's actually very nice and we're all fond of her, you have to remember that from her point of view we three are just friends who live together. We tried to stick mostly to the truth that our parents were friends and after a bad accident we all moved in here together. In the muggle world it's illegal to have more than one wife so as we get older our friends will have time to adjust to us being an unmarried trio, you never had that time and again I'm sorry."

"It's fine Luna but do girls hit on Harry often?"

"Yeah he's got quite good at handling it though with Hermione and I in his head giving advice how can he go wrong?" Luna smiled at a memory, "I thought we were going to have trouble on our French trip though when this arse kept hitting on Hermione, Harry was ready to throw him off the Eiffel Tower and claim it was an accident. We're going to have to start 'dating' each other soon and just see what the reaction is like."

"I don't see how your friends can miss that Harry's totally devoted to you both, I spotted it in under ten minutes!"

“Harry’s a pretty special guy which is usually the cause of the problem, he’s so nice to people that some of the girls misread the signals and think he fancies them. Luckily he has Hermione and me to keep him right.”

“I think you should head back to them and stop worrying about me, I had a wonderful time today.”

As Luna was leaving she turned back to her friend, “Do you still like horses as much?” the expression on Ginny’s face was all the answer she needed, “Nym’s begged off with homework so it’s me, you, Hermione and Susan having some girl time while riding around the estate after breakfast.”

Ginny’s eyes were alight with excitement, “Oh Luna how am I supposed to sleep now, you’re a wicked witch!” her beaming smile belied any trace of hurt in those words and, if she got any sleep tonight, Ginny was sure her dreams would be pleasant.

-oOoOo-

Luna snuggled into Harry as his hand automatically began stroking her hair, “Feeling better love?”

She kissed his cheek, “You know I am, our Hermione was right as usual, I needed to get it off my chest, well if I had a chest!”

“Luna you know I’m a year older and your turn will come...”

“Yeah but meanwhile I have to watch while our husband can’t take his eyes off them!”

Harry kissed her forehead, “While I will never deny I adore watching my beautiful Hermione grow I also have the anticipation that I’m very soon going to have the whole experience again with my gorgeous Luna, I’m the luckiest guy on the planet.”

“Oh Luna, our wizard is getting so smooth at that, just as well we got him first or he’d be charming girls up and down the country. We’re

going to have to stake our claim on him pretty soon, Monday at school works for me!" she couldn't contain her giggles.

Luna though was in a thoughtful mood, "In one world I'm Luna Lovegood while in the other I'm Lady Luna, it's only here that I'm allowed to be the person I want to be, Luna Potter. That's what I want most but it was clear tonight it's never going to happen."

Harry gently kissed her forehead, "To me you will always be my gorgeous Luna who I'm proud to call my wife and am looking forward to the day when our children call you mother, that's what I want most no matter what world we're in!"

"Alright Potter that does it, I want my goodnight kiss and I want it NOW! C'mere you." Hermione grabbed her husband and they shared their most passionate kiss to date as Luna eagerly awaited her turn.

Harry was having trouble breathing by the time Hermione was finished, "I mean it Harry, as of Monday you're ours, if our friends don't like it - too bad!"

Harry couldn't answer as Luna was now attacking him in exactly the same wonderful fashion that Hermione had a moment ago while their ritual goodnight kiss just expanded to become goodnight kisses. Later as Harry held his two sleeping wives he rather smugly thought he'd been right earlier, he was the luckiest guy on the planet.

-oOoOo-

Ron Weasley was also still awake but by no stretch of the imagination would the boy consider himself lucky, he stared at the empty bed in their dorm as the green-eyed monster of jealousy ran rampant through every fibre of his being. How could a non-flying squib like Longbottom be friends with Potter while he was shunned and, if their returning chasers and captain were to be believed, had missed the Quidditch match of the decade.

If he had to hear one more time about Ginny's brilliant flying, her lightning-quick new Nimbus two thousand or fantastic catch of the

snitch, Ron might actually throw up. From the look on Cormac McLaggen's face it was clear he felt the same, though Ron was sure that was because it was only a matter of time before she replaced him on the team.

Ron shivered at the thought of another one of his siblings being poised to outshine him, his elder brothers were bad enough but his younger sister hadn't been in the place a week yet everyone had been talking about her since Ginny walked in the door. This would make his baby sister the youngest seeker in over a century and visions of Ginny catching the snitch for Gryffindor against Slytherin didn't fill him with joy but dread. Ron was used to everything in his life being shit but he felt Ginny's instant success was rubbing his nose in it.

He could sum up his troubles in one word, Potter! It was a book about Potter that got Ginny the gold, noticing the rat that betrayed Potter's parents got her the broom and then Potter himself arranged for her to play seeker, all he got was a wand jabbed into his nuts from that scary witch and a warning he had every intention of heeding!

In Ron's fantasy Harry Potter would have attended Hogwarts last year and been sorted into Gryffindor with him, the two best friends would have spent hours talking about Quidditch and playing chess while Ron basked in the glory of his close association with the boy who lived. Instead he turns up a year late, married to loony and that other nutter with the added embarrassment of being sorted into Hufflepuff.

He would love to plot revenge but had witnessed them take down Snape, Dumbledore and that wizard from the school board, he hardly thought the Potters would be shaking in their shoes if Ron Weasley was swearing vengeance for all the wrongs visited upon him.

He had taken the only option left open to him, the letter to his mother probably wouldn't see him invited to the Potters but it would at least stop Ginny and the twins from going. For the covetous child named Ronald Billius Weasley this was better than nothing, if he couldn't have it then neither should they was the way his mind worked. Ron was expecting his mother's answer in the morning.

-oOoOo-

Breakfast that morning in the manor was a happy affair with the noise level higher than usual due to their invited guests excitement over yesterday and enthusiasm for what today would bring.

The thought of going riding this morning had Ginny so wound-up she could hardly sit still, "Luna do you have any owls? I couldn't sleep and ended up writing a letter to my mum."

Hedwig flashed in and landed on the back of Hermione's chair, "Hedwig says she'll take your letter, Harry I think it might be a good idea if you sent a small note as well."

Hermione had barely said the words when Cas popped in with a writing set and wrapped gift. Harry surprised her by kissing the little elf on the top of her head.

"Cas you are simply wonderful, I don't know what we'd do without you."

The blushing elf took a moment to respond, "Oh this one is spending way too much time with Sirius, girls you better get him tied down soon."

Hermione winked at Luna, "We thought so too Cas, starting tomorrow he's ours!"

"Miss Jillian is going to be so disappointed, well that explains the smiles on your three faces this morning but not Maia's and Sirius."

"Cas I'm a bit beyond being embarrassed, even by you," Sirius smugly replied.

She changed into her human disguise and sashayed towards the door, looking back over her shoulder she asked in a sultry voice, "Are you sure about that Sirius?"

Watching as Sirius's ego crumbled before their eyes was just too funny for words as the room was again rocking with laughter, Maia just play punched him on the arm, "You should know better than to try and mess with Cas, she takes no prisoners and now you're going to tell us all the story behind that."

Sirius was looking around the room for assistance or an escape route; he knew he was screwed when he noticed Jonathon and Martha holding on to each other in their frame, their obvious glee at his discomfort reminding him they both knew the story. If he didn't come clean Jonathon would be telling his version of the story which would undoubtedly paint Sirius in an even worse light, after all James had picked up his love of pranks from his father.

Laughter tears were running down Harry's cheeks as he listened to his godfather describe how he was being threatened by his mother, while trying to convince his father not to tell Remus, who was currently howling with laughter. His own laughter was interrupted by Hermione over their bond, they had heard the story of Sirius giving his bike to Hagrid but this was the first instance where they'd heard how much the bike meant to him. They decided to see Hagrid and discover what happened to it as repairing and returning it would make the perfect Christmas gift for the marauder.

-oOoOo-

Augusta Longbottom was also enjoying a leisurely Sunday morning, she'd had quite a week. The bitch who tortured her Frank and Alice was dead, the bastard who told his master about them as good as dead while the person who she was sure had a hand in it was now the most wanted wizard in Britain, and all because the three Potters had hit Hogwarts.

They may embrace the muggle world more than her pureblood lifestyle was comfortable with but Augusta couldn't argue that whatever they were doing was undoubtedly working. Her grandson had been terrified of Snape yet these three had faced both him and Dumbledore down, a feat she couldn't think of anyone else being able to match.

She had no hesitation in allowing Neville to spend the weekend with them, as Harry stated it was only that old fool interfering that prevented both boys growing up together. Augusta was hoping that some of their assertiveness would rub off on her Grandson, either that or she would have to start looking for a good witch that she could betroth him with to ensure the Longbottom line.

-oOoOo-

There wasn't much laughter at the breakfast table in the Burrow, apart from the fact this was their first weekend with only the two of them present, Ron's letter was playing heavily on Molly's mind. She was aware from her chat with Ginny that most of his claims were nothing more than blatant manipulation and gross exaggeration of the facts. She would have already sent him a howler if not for one sentence that struck a chord with her psyche, 'Potter is deliberately trying to split the Weasley family, why else would he invite three members of the family and leave two behind'.

Ginny had already explained why Ron wasn't invited but when you added in that she and Arthur had a blazing row when they returned home and her daughter was no longer speaking to her then the seeds of doubt began to germinate in her mind.

She let out a scream before Arthur's hand was on her arm, offering reassurance, "It's Hedwig, hello girl, are those for us?"

She nodded and placed the two letters and gift on the table before flashing back out again, Molly made a grab for the one bearing Ginny's handwriting.

Mum

I am sorry that we argued the other night and hope you can forgive me, I had a very bad day but that's no excuse for treating you like that when all you were doing was looking out for me.

We played a Quidditch match against the full Gryffindor team yesterday and won, I was our team's seeker and caught the snitch! Fred and George say I'm a certainty to make the team and also that

the potion's lesson with Maia was the best they'd ever had, I don't have anything to compare it to but thought it was great.

Last night we ate something called 'pizza' in a muggle restaurant before going to a bowling alley and knocking down skittles, we also got to meet some of their muggle friends as well.

Luna's just told me we're going horse riding tomorrow around the estate and I'm almost bursting with excitement, to an outsider the Potter's seem so different from us but really they're exactly the same, family and friends are the most important things in the world to them, I forgot that when I snubbed you and again I'm sorry mum.

Love to you and dad

Ginny

Arthur had his arm around his wife as they both read the letter, he could actually feel the tension leaving Molly's body. "Well it sounds like they're enjoying themselves, flying and horse riding in the one weekend, no wonder our daughter was desperate to go there."

Molly only nodded, she was too busy opening the other one only to discover that it was from Lord Potter,

Dear Mrs Weasley

I felt compelled to write and apologise for my behaviour while you were a guest in my house, you expressed concerns about your daughter's welfare and I was rude in return, this is not our usual form of hospitality and my only excuse is we had a pretty awful few days and you caught us at a particularly bad moment.

My Luna considers Ginny to be her best friend and your daughter was also responsible for allowing justice to be carried out against the rat who betrayed my parents, Cas was devoted to my mother and this may have influenced her slightly when she went clothes shopping for Ginny.

We hope, with your permission, that Ginny will be able to accompany us on many more outings like last night and for that she will need the wardrobe that Cas has provided. Fred and George are rightly very protective of their sister but appear delighted she has the opportunity to see and experience new things, I can only hope this is a view that's shared by the whole family.

Lastly the small gift attached is from my sister Danielle; she is very protective of her big brother and is going to be an extremely powerful witch. I feel that trying to explain a magical toddler to the matriarch of the Weasley family would be a bit like trying to tell Hedwig how to fly, I'll just say sorry and hope you can except the small gift as an apology.

Lord Harry James Potter

Both Weasley's now stared at the wrapped gift, afraid to open it given the extravagances they'd seen at the manor. Arthur unwrapped the box and lifted the lid on a sight that caused both of them to smile, sitting there was a dozen strawberries that appeared dipped in milk chocolate, complete with a white chocolate shirt that had dark chocolate buttons and bow tie.

As an apology it was exquisite without being overly extravagant and, combined with the letters from Ginny and Harry, went a long way to putting their minds at ease.

Molly thought they looked too beautiful to eat, that was before Arthur placed one in her mouth though, Molly's opinion completely changed with the first bite. Their pleasure was doubled on discovery of another layer below so, with no kids left in the house, the couple spent a wonderful Sunday morning relaxing while feeding each other chocolate strawberries, all thoughts of Ron's letter forgotten for now.

A\N Thanks for reading.

My next post will be Chapter 5 of 'Can't', hopefully by the weekend.

Chapter 9

Ginny seemed to be in seventh heaven as she rode alongside Luna on the track, Hermione watched the two giggling girls in front of her who's moods appeared in sharp contrast to the thoughtful girl riding by her side, "What's the matter Susan, I thought you liked horse riding?"

"Oh I do Hermione it's just..." Susan decide to spill the beans, "Cedric asked me to let him know if there were any decent Hufflepuff players in the match yesterday, when I tell him how good the three Potter's are he won't give you a moment's peace."

Hermione couldn't resist teasing the girl, "And you wish he was paying all that attention to you?"

Susan's face was red but she was determined to air her worries, "Nym told us you don't like your business broadcast but I couldn't tell Cedric lies, what should I do?"

"Susan I'm sure the Gryffindor team have already mentioned the match and we don't expect our guests to swear secrecy oaths. We would appreciate you not telling what part of the country we live but even then people would have a hard time finding Potter Manor. When your friends ask about us please don't feel you have to tell lies, as you can see we've nothing to hide, we just value our privacy."

The change in Susan was remarkable, the girl had clearly been worried about it and now appeared as if a weight had been lifted from her shoulders, "Thanks Hermione, I know with my aunt's job there are things I shouldn't talk about, it's really hard to make friends when your guardian could be the next minister so I understand the fascination with the Potters and your uneasiness with it, I really have enjoyed myself here and would like to be a friend to all of you."

"Thanks Susan, it's been a hell of a few days and this is just what we needed to recover, both Luna and I love riding while Harry prefers his broom but we all share our hobbies with each other. Luna has always been fascinated with astronomy and now Harry and I are just

as keen on it, we tend to lose track of the time and spend hours up there until Cas comes along and chases us into bed. We'll show you our set-up later."

Susan was so glad she had spoken about her fears, she was also looking forward to seeing their astronomy set-up since it was a subject she liked to study. The big excitement though was the defence lesson this afternoon, her aunt was dismayed when she heard how little Susan had been taught last year, she'd complained it was bad enough Fudge was cutting their budget but when Hogwarts didn't teach students defence how the hell was she supposed to find new aurors.

-oOoOo-

Harry had quickly reached the conclusion that wizards just didn't do exercise, they were playing two-on-two basketball and Neville was ready to collapse after ten minutes, the twins weren't much better while he'd hardly broke sweat yet. He and Neville were playing against the twin and getting beaten in the beginning, but Harry was now dancing around both twins and, having just levelled the game, called a halt for some refreshments.

Neville was struggling for breath as they all took a seat, "Do you play this often Harry?"

"We play it at school and the girls also do hockey, now there's a dangerous sport! Give twenty two young girls great big sticks and send them on the pitch to try and hit a ball, scary as hell. When we were in Florida, Emma took us all to see ice hockey which seemed like a battle on ice with the puck irrelevant."

The three were a bit confused so George asked the question, "Do muggles have a lot of sports?"

Harry had to laugh, "Non-magical people tend to be so competitive they can turn putting Christmas decorations on your house into a sport, to answer your question they have hundreds, if not thousands. We visited Barcelona this summer where the Olympic Games were held, here the top athletes from every corner of the globe compete to

see who the best in the world is, you have to be the best in your country just to earn the honour of competing. Watching the elite athletes run one hundred meters in just under ten seconds is a phenomenal sight, the Olympic motto is 'swifter, higher, stronger' and Sirius claims this is the difference in our worlds. While magical users adhere to the 'if it aint broke don't fix it' philosophy, non-magical people are more likely to strip something to pieces to see if they can improve it."

Fred thought Harry was having a laugh, "Ten seconds?"

"You have to see it to believe it guys, I saw it. I'm sure we have a Guinness Book of World Records somewhere in the house, some of the stuff in that has you questioning your sanity but it's all true."

"You make the muggle world sound so much better than ours," bemoaned Neville.

"Yeah it can be great, but so can the magical and we have no intention of limiting ourselves to just one, it's a great big world out there guys and there is no reason why we can't enjoy all of it. Emma and Hermione cried the first time they saw a unicorn because they both thought it was so beautiful, I love flying my broom and travelling with Hedwig is the only way to go. It takes over eight hours flight time to get to Florida by non-magical means, before adding in transfer times and waiting at the airport, Hedwig gets us from house to house in a jiffy. Without magic I would never have known my grandparents and I can't imagine our lives without Cas in them, Emma and Maia set out to see us get the best both worlds had to offer and that is something we're all very happy to continue with."

The other three boys couldn't disagree with him, Neville was left wondering what his traditionalist Grandmother would make of it all, hopefully he would learn as much from his defence lesson as he did from potions then she might see the benefits too.

-oOoOo-

Remus was working with the Hogwarts group while Sirius had the Potters and Nym, he demonstrated a simple spell that fired a blob of coloured jelly at your opponent, having first charmed their wands to shoot different colours.

The five felt silly in their coveralls and goggles as Remus explained the exercise he wanted to teach them today, "We are going to be working on spell accuracy and evading getting hit, the point of this is for you to learn to hit what you aim at while evading curses fired at you. Shields are very useful but they don't block all spells and, while you're maintaining it you can't fire back."

The twins were set against the other three and within a minute all five were covered in jelly and laughing, Remus called a halt and then shouted on Harry. "You seem to have missed half the lesson, you know the part where you're not supposed to get hit! This is not like trading punches where you can take a hit to make sure you get yours in, the wrong spell hits you and you could be incapacitated, unconscious or worse."

Harry jogged over and Remus unveiled his new plan, "I want the five of you to try and hit Harry."

Ginny was outraged, "Five against one, that's not fair!"

"I know but there is only the five of you, Sirius won't loan me anyone else to help you out."

Fred fired the first curse at Harry and he simply moved his body out of its path, soon they were all firing at him and hitting mostly thin air, occasionally he had to flash up a shield when the barrages had him bracketed. After a minute or so Harry started to return fire and hit all five of them directly on their goggles in under ten seconds, they were forced to stop as Harry had effectively blinded them.

Remus had them remove their goggles and sit down as Harry headed back to his group, "Ok lessons learned here, yes Ginny its not fair but only in a formal duel do you play by set rules, in a fight the objective is to take out your opponent without any injury to yourself. Fred and George, can you cast a shield?"

Both boys nodded before Remus continued, "Then why didn't you cast it over the group and let the other three fire at Harry from behind your shield, it would have saved everyone getting hit. That's also another lesson, Harry effectively put you all out of the fight with a splat of jelly, any spell can be your downfall so don't let it hit you. Your mind is your greatest weapon in a fight so think, act, survive – that's the name of the game. You five stood there in a line shooting curses at Harry as if you were at a fairground, instead you were the ones lined up like ducks in a shooting gallery."

Neville was sitting, covered in jelly but wearing a large grin, "Something amusing you Neville?"

"No sir, I am just very happy to be actually learning about defence from someone who knows what they're talking about, we wasted a full year learning nothing but spells that we weren't allowed to actually use in class, I've fired off more in the last ten minutes than I did all last year"

"Ok so let's try our original exercise again, same teams but only one set firing at a time to give the others practice at dodging, when I say switch that's exactly what you do. Fred and George you pair fire first."

Remus watched as the groups concentrated on whatever aspect of the exercise they were currently practicing, he'd known the original would end up in a stramash but it fairly broke the ice, they were taking it seriously now.

When Fred cast a shield to allow George to keep firing Remus was impressed by the other teams response, Neville kept up a rapid rate of fire while the two girls snuck around either side, by the time the girls were in position and Remus called 'switch!', the twins found themselves under fire from three sides and getting covered in jelly.

Remus called a halt and had them take a seat to sum up before they finished for the day, "We only used the one spell today because Ginny hasn't been taught any others yet but the most important lesson you need to learn in defence is not to let the curse hit you,

whether that's by using shields, dodging, hiding behind something or simply running away, they can all be effective in the right situation. Fred what did you discover today about using shields?"

"When we were behind it our movement was severely restricted, the instant you yelled switch we were taking spells from three directions and, even with both of us using them, they always had a member with a free shot."

"Excellent, you all saw Harry use shields but only if he couldn't dodge all the spells coming at him, your strategy would have worked then because you had superior numbers, instead you tied yourself down to a position that was easily outflanked and you paid the price."

Susan, like Neville earlier was now smiling, this was the kind of lessons her aunt wanted taught, not practice the wand movements and incantation for a jelly-legs curse without even being allowed to cast it.

They then watched in awe as the three Potters took down Sirius, Remus and Nym in the most amazing fight they had ever even heard of, never mind got to watch. The speed of all six was unbelievable but, just like their flying, the Potters movements were in perfect harmony with each other and eventually won the day.

They were making their way back to their rooms to get washed and changed for dinner when Susan caught up with Nym, "You were amazing out there, I heard in the common room you wanted to become an auror?"

"Yes but please don't say anything to your aunt, if I get into the program I want it to be on my abilities Susan."

Susan couldn't contain a chuckle, "Nym if I told Aunt Amelia about you, she would have a contract signed now to prevent you changing your mind. She's always bemoaning the lack of talent in the auror program so you will have no problem acing it, right now you could probably hold your own with half the aurors in her department."

Nym was actually blushing, "Thanks Susan, Sirius and Remus have been coaching me every chance we get for the last three years, practicing against the Potter trio also helps refine your skills, those three are just scary. Snape had no idea what he was taking on that first day in the great hall, he never stood a chance."

Susan could see the older witch was right, even with three high calibre opponents against them the Potters had still won. Their bond, general fitness levels and three years of training would have Amelia Bones salivating over the thought of them in her auror program, seeing the way the Potters lived Susan didn't think there was a hope in hell of that happening.

-oOoOo-

Dinner that night was a happy affair with everyone now more relaxed and comfortable with each other, Danni was vying for the affection of her siblings as she was feeling a little left out this weekend, they duly lavished their attention on her and all was right again in the two-year-olds world.

Harry was once more entrapped by the little minx into putting her to bed while his two wives read to the toddler, the whole tableaux was observed by their friends before they headed up to the roof.

Ginny couldn't fail to notice the expressions of bliss coming from her friends as they performed this night-time ritual, there was also no hiding the looks of longing coming from both Neville and Susan.

Perhaps if Ron could see this then he might appreciate his family more, Harry, Luna and Hermione had all been only children before Danni was born and their devotion to the toddler was heart warming, Susan and Neville seemed to think having a sibling would be wonderful while Ron's attitude was just another pair of hands to take food out of his mouth, she loved her brother dearly but sometimes despaired if he would ever grow up enough to see past his greed and jealousy.

On top of Potter manor they entered their small home-made observatory and marvelled at the sliding roof and reflector telescope,

mounted on a tripod that seemed to have bits sticking out everywhere. The walls of the 'room' were plastered in photographs of space as Luna explained, "We have adapters that allow a camera to be fitted to the scope so we can take pictures of whatever we see, the shop we buy our equipment from sells everything you can think of and is way cheaper than the one in Diagon Alley because these are mass produced."

All were impressed, not only by the pictures papering the walls but by the quality of image you got looking through the eye piece, Harry removed a box from the shelf, "As I told the guys earlier today we believe in taking the best of both worlds."

He opened the box to reveal a magical model of the solar system, one tap with his wand on the control box and the contents floated out the box as the planets arranged themselves around the model sun. "We can enter any date and the planets will automatically move into the correct alignment that corresponds exactly with where they should be in the galaxy. The only thing that compares with this in the non-magical world is a planetarium, these are buildings where the public can go to view projections of the galaxy. Professor Sinistra would love that so when she's coming here to see this we could arrange a visit to the one in London as well."

Susan lay in bed trying to put her weekend into some perspective but all she could think of was that Cedric would be speaking to her tomorrow, she was aware it was only on the subject of the Potters and Quidditch but a witch could dream, couldn't she? It may only be about Quidditch but she would have bet last week he didn't even know her name, Susan knew she had it bad for Cedric but there was nothing she could do about it, except hope she didn't come across as a total dweeb and drool all over him.

Neville was also trying to put the weekend into perspective, the boy couldn't remember when he'd ever enjoyed himself as much. The atmosphere in Potter Manor was so far removed from that of the Longbottom one it might well have been different universe, all the laughter and chatting at the table would have his Grandmother reaching for her wand to restore proper decorum.

Neville felt as if he'd been allowed to be a 'normal teenager' and had to admit had really enjoyed the experience, enjoyed it so much he didn't want to go back to being the other boy, he would just have to see how things progressed and face his Gran when the time came.

The twins were gleefully plotting away on new methods of causing mayhem in Hogwarts, meeting their heroes was easily the highlight of the week, finding out they were even sneakier and more devious than they imagined was just brilliant. Their estimation of the three Potter firsties just went a few notches higher, being raised by the marauders for three years had obviously had an effect on them, that and their awesome duel that was beyond anything the twins could manage.

Ginny still felt like a princess in a fairytale, the little red head didn't think she would ever get used to having her own shower and stepping out to find her laundry lifted while pyjamas were laid out for her. This was so far removed from queuing for the bathroom and then her mum shouting at everyone to bring their washing down that it was scary. Thinking of her mum reminded her that she hadn't received a reply to her letter, she just hoped it wasn't a howler tomorrow in the great hall.

Harry held both his wives, all three were worried how their friends would react to the news that they were now 'dating', best case scenario was getting teased about it at every opportunity for a few days until something else came along and became the talk of the school. None of them wanted to think about the worse that could happen, growing up friendless led them to appreciate the ones they now had even more, if the situation proved just too weird for them though they were probably better off finding out now, rather than a couple of years further down the road.

Tonight's goodnight kisses were more about reassuring each other that no matter what happened tomorrow they would never be lonely again.

-oOoOo-

Ginny headed towards the Gryffindor table with the twins and Neville, ready to face her first full week at Hogwarts, what she wasn't ready to

face was the sight of their family owl Errol struggling in her direction with a howler in her talons, her mother apparently didn't take too kindly to her apology.

Ron couldn't keep the smirk off his face at the howler destined for his siblings, in his eyes their desertion of him deserved no less. His expression quickly changed to one of horror when the old owl collapsed onto his breakfast and realisation dawned that the dreaded howler was destined for him, he soon found himself sitting alone as space magically appeared around him, Molly Weasley's howlers were the stuff of legend and students got out of the way so fast it could almost have been apparition.

With trembling hands Ron opened the now smoking red letter and the walls of the great hall reverberated to an amplified Molly, "Ronald Weasley, if you paid as much attention to your school work as you do to whatever other family members are doing then you wouldn't have Professor McGonagall threatening to make you repeat a year!" Molly's voice lowered to an almost conversation level before her next remark, "Ginny dear, I was delighted to get your letter, please thank Harry for me when you next see him, his gift was very thoughtful."

The decibel level was once more approaching permanent hearing damage level as howler Molly again addressed her youngest son, "Your behaviour is not what your father and I expect from our family and I can honestly say I don't think I've ever been more disappointed in one of my children, if your grades and attitude don't show a major improvement very soon then you won't be back at Hogwarts after Christmas!"

The other four Weasley's at the table watched Ron dash out the hall, it was plain to them that he must have written home with wild accusations regarding the Potter situation, while all agreed their brother was in a mess entirely of his own making they wouldn't wish their mother's howlers on anyone.

Susan had observed the whole scene in horror, public humiliation in front of the entire school was not the ideal way to start the week, how any parent could do that to their child was beyond her understanding. She was so engrossed in her thoughts she didn't even notice that

Cedric had sat beside her at the Hufflepuff table, the young witch nearly jumped out of her skin when he spoke.

“Good morning Susan, oh sorry I didn’t mean to startle you!”

“Oh Cedric, I just didn’t see you sitting there.”

Cedric had been on tenterhooks since he heard the rumours from the Gryffindor’s about the match at the weekend, the trouble was that anything involving the Weasley twins always needed to be confirmed by another source, he didn’t want to get his hopes up only to discover he’d been pranked. “Susan, please tell me if the Potter’s are as good as I’ve heard.”

“Cedric I don’t know what you’ve heard but they are brilliant, totally eclipsed the Gryffindor chasers,” Cedric was now standing doing his version of a victory dance, Susan felt terrible interrupting since, being a Hufflepuff, he didn’t get to practice it much but she had to tell him, “Cedric none of them want to play Quidditch, even Tonks says she’s too busy.”

The Hufflepuff Quidditch captain suddenly appeared to have had an encounter with a dementor as all the happiness fled from his body, he slumped back down beside Susan, “Why is all this happening to me? McGonagall has changed the schedule, the first match is Halloween and we’re playing Gryffindor. As if that wasn’t bad enough she wants to reassure parents that Hogwarts is ‘business as usual’ by inviting them all to the castle for the game and feast. Two of last years chasers have already been to see me in tears, not wanting to be humiliated in front of their parents.”

Susan was glad she had that talk with Hermione as Cedric’s next move turned the girl’s insides to mush, he grabbed her hand in both of his and pleaded with her.

“Susan you have to help me please, you have to talk to them or at least give me something to work with, please say you’ll help Susan?”

Any defence she had was gone the instant she gazed into those gorgeous eyes, resistance was not only futile, she couldn't wait to be assimilated! "I'll do what I can Cedric but they're pretty set in their ways."

Hope blossomed once more for Cedric thanks to this young witch, without thinking he showed his appreciation by kissing her cheek, "Thanks Susan, you're an angel!"

Cedric rose to go and attempt to persuade Tonks to play, leaving behind a witch who was ready to faint, only Hannah's whispered "Cedric kissed you!" let her know she wasn't still lying in bed at Potter manor having her best dream ever – it was real!

-oOoOo-

The three Potters said goodbye to Emma and kissed a smiling Danni, who was happily chanting 'no train' to the amusement of them all, this is what she was used to, dropping them off with her mother in the morning. It wasn't really necessary for the toddler to make the twenty minute journey but she just loved being in the car with her siblings.

Her siblings were currently walking through the gates of Wyedean High School, holding hands as they headed towards the area they usually hung out with their friends.

Jillian was determined not to listen to Matt and Jamie's claims that Harry wanted her as a friend only, that same determination was going to see her ask the boy she fancied to her party as her date. Jillian had been up early this morning and taken particular care with her clothes and make-up, she was looking at her best and now just needed what was best for her, a certain Harry Potter as her boyfriend.

All that preparation and hours spent rehearsing how she would ask him appeared to be for naught though as the object of her affections approached with a girl in each hand, Jillian hoped there was a simple explanation to this new occurrence, simple meaning anything other than he was dating someone else.

“Hey Luna, Hermione, when are you going to ditch this loser Potter and hang out with me?”

“Well Dawson it’s nice to know that in this changing world we can always depend on your patter being as lame as ever.” The total lack of malice in their words soon had everyone but Jillian chuckling though Donna as usual was the one to ask what they all were thinking.

Indicating their hands, she joked, “Have you guys had an accident with superglue or is there something you want to tell us?”

Harry wasn’t going to mess about, “Well both girls finally got fed-up waiting on me asking them out so they both asked me, what can I say Dawson, you’ve either got it or you haven’t!”

“If this is your idea of a joke then I don’t think it’s very funny,” Jillian was trying really hard not to cry.

Harry spoke to the group but his eyes were focused on Jillian, “I would never joke about Hermione and Luna, they’ve meant the world to me for three years now and will do so for many years to come. It was always going to be one of these girls for me and I can’t believe my luck that the two of them like me in return.” Both girls were now cuddling into him as he had an arm round each girl.

Jillian ran away crying and the trio thought they might have overdone it until Claire spoke, “She’ll be ok, we’re really happy for you three but we better go and check she’s alright,” Donna nodded in agreement, calling, “Catch you later!” as both girls set off to find Jillian.

Jamie was dumbstruck but Matt was rarely lost for words, “Girls, one of you is better than this Muppet deserves but both of you?”

“You know Dawson I think that’s the first thing you’ve ever said that I agree with, apart from the Muppet part of course.” Harry answered.

Hermione and Luna shared a look that meant ‘boys!’ in any language before the older girl shared her fears, “We were really worried that

you guys would think us weird or something but it just makes sense to the three of us, we both liked Harry and he wouldn't choose between us. Luna and I decided we could share and Harry has been smiling ever since."

"No bloody wonder!" blurted Jamie before he got control of his speech again.

"Why thank you Jamie, I'm sure there was a compliment in there somewhere," Luna giggled.

They all headed off to find the three girls before their first class.

The five girls met up in the toilet as Jillian washed her face, "Sorry about that Hermione and Luna but you weren't the only one's who liked Harry, I suppose I should congratulate you but I honestly can't at the moment, can you give me some time?"

"Sure Jillian, we understand, that's why we came to the decision we did. Luna and I reckoned it would be easier to share Harry with each other than watch him be with someone else. His actions over the holidays every time a boy came anywhere near one of us convinced us both he might feel the same. We just hope you lot aren't too weirded out by the situation."

"Put my name down if you ever want to up it to three girls," Jillian replied and the others were convinced she wasn't joking.

Donna again couldn't resist asking the question she was dying to know the answer to, "Luna, how do you feel when Harry's kissing Hermione?"

"Oh that's easy, if he's kissing Hermione that means either I'm next, which is pure anticipation or I've just been kissed. At that point the feelings are indescribable!" Her expression was one of utter bliss and seemed to focus Jillian's determination.

"OK what I want for my birthday is a shirt with number three on the back!"

“Just how high do those numbers go?” asked Claire as all three of the girls stared at Luna who was so obviously in her happy place.

Hermione could only shake her head, so much for taking Harry off the market, Luna had just unintentionally given their product such an endorsement that they all wanted a piece of him now.

-oOoOo-

This was not the retirement Albus Dumbledore had imagined for himself, sitting on a commode in a secret room underneath his brother's pub. Even by wizarding standards the Hog's Head was more of a hovel than a hotel, the secret room reflected the low standard of décor that had its inspiration in medieval dungeons.

He'd been reduced from fabulous holidays in Potter properties all over the world to farting in a potty at a Dumbledore dump in Hogsmead! His magic was still extremely unpredictable so, barring a miracle he was confined here for the foreseeable future.

When the old wizard heard the beautiful sound of phoenix song his hopes soared that the miracle might actually happen, especially when he recognised the bird that appeared in a ball of flame, “FAWKES!”

-oOoOo-

Amelia Bones was just wrapping up her Monday morning departmental briefing when the most wanted man in Britain was delivered, practically gift wrapped into the centre of a room filled with forty aurors. Instead of a wand, Albus was left with a toilet roll in his hand as his only weapon, while this may be an effective deterrent to 'Klingons', wizards and witches were made of more substantial stuff.

Albus had been hit with half a dozen stunners before Amelia managed to get control of the room again, sending immediately for a healer for the now unconscious old wizard. The phoenix had screamed down at Dumbledore the entire time before changing his song to a more melodious, calming lament then flashing out the room, leaving the wizard who had magically constrained the phoenix lying

unconscious on the floor with his greying underwear around his bony ankles.

For the wizard to whom public image was everything, this was a fitting ending from the creature of the light that had been forced to commit acts totally opposed to its nature, Fawkes was free now that he'd finished his business here.

-oOoOo-

The spirit that was the sixteen-year-old Tom Riddle had been awakened, activated by someone writing in his former diary's seemingly blank pages. Tom was dismayed to discover that it was nineteen-ninety-two and he had been considered dead for over a decade, he was desperate for information as he'd been incommunicado for almost fifty years.

The diary was constructed to give Tom his body back by feeding off the life force of whoever wrote in it before draining them completely, but he was now wondering if a different scenario might be more beneficial to him, yes he would have his body, power and knowledge back but would be confined to working in the shadows while trying to build a power base.

He had an opportunity here to take over someone else's body by transferring his consciousness, power and soul to his victim, giving him a new identity and, thanks to the writer, more advantages in life than Tom Riddle could ever hope for.

Here was a golden chance to kill off Tom Riddle without having to invent his Voldemort persona, by taking this identity the entire world would open up to him, he could be on the Wizengamot by age twenty and be minister, or at least the power behind it by the time he was thirty.

All he would have to do was to convince the person writing in the diary of the tremendous advantages that voluntary joining with him would bestow upon his person, though he used the term 'joining' loosely. After providing the body everything that made his host who he was would be overwritten by Tom, Draco Malfoy would cease to

exist as he took the rich, pureblood's body as phase one of his plans for conquering Britain.

The Malfoy name and money behind him would render Tom untouchable, find a more suitable match than the Parkinson girl and he would be unstoppable, a witch from a light family would be more suitable for his new plans as he would no longer have to play the 'pureblood supremacy' card to obtain the power he craved. He would adopt whatever political beliefs that would render him the most support and, with the Malfoy gold behind him, become a major player in the social and political scene, Draco Malfoy was about to become a prodigy whose face would never be out the newspapers.

Draco at present was a whiney little git who would need to be shown the advantages of merging with him, Tom planned an act of such horror and destruction there would be multiple chapters dedicated to the event in the next edition of 'Hogwarts a History', assuming there would still be a Hogwarts when he was finished with it!

The boy would be so impressed he'd join immediately or so scared that he wouldn't object, either situation worked for Tom Riddle.

A/N Thanks for reading

Chapter 10

Glum was the only word able to describe the mood of the three Potters at dinner that night which, for some reason Sirius found immensely entertaining and repeatedly kept disintegrating into bouts of laughter.

Hermione slammed down her cutlery, "Sirius for the last time, this is not funny! We wanted our friends to accept our relationship, not form a bloody queue to join it!"

Emma tried to understand the problem, "But Hermione can't you just tell them no?"

"Mum, how do I tell our friends that I'm willing to share with Luna but not them? They don't know anything about bonds, all they see is Luna's eyes glazing over whenever she even thinks about Harry kissing her and they all want some of the same."

At the mention of kissing her husband, Luna's expression told everyone she was in her happy place, Harry's face was red enough to stop traffic while Sirius ended up with tears running down his cheeks and his head under the table as he laughed uncontrollably, uncontrollably that is until Maia's comment brought him instantly back to the present predicament.

"Oh if Harry's that good a kisser I wonder if he could give some pointers to Sirius, then again they say you can't teach an old dog new tricks!"

The thump of Sirius's head hitting the underside of the table was loud and the force more than enough to rattle the crockery but at least it got the trio smiling, which was Maia's intent in the first place.

Harry was shaking his head in disbelief, "I never thought I would be looking forward to our time at Hogwarts to get some normality into our lives."

“Never mind normality, we’ve got Jillian’s party on Friday night and no way to get out of it!” bemoaned Hermione.

“Unless we were really bad and got grounded?” Luna offered.

Emma was quick to dispel that option, “if you were really bad we wouldn’t ground you but take you there ourselves.”

Harry actually brightened at this, “That’s not a bad idea, you could sit with me all night, bring Danni and she would keep me safe.”

Sirius was still rubbing his head, “I can’t believe you’re getting upset over girls chasing you, just enjoy it!” the sudden change in atmosphere told the marauder he’d said the wrong thing, Harry’s murderous expression only confirmed this.

“I already have two wonderful girls who are both my wives, I neither want nor need other girls hanging over me and I will never date anyone else. If you’ll excuse us we’re going through to the library to talk with my grandparents, maybe they can offer some useful advice.”

They left for the library but all three had let Sirius know he was in the doghouse, “Shit! Every time I think that I’m finally getting the hang of this parenting gig it all seems to blow up in my face. How do you both cope?”

Emma gave a sympathetic smile to the struggling marauder, “Dan used to say pretty much the same thing though he was always trying too hard, we have great kids but they face problems that are out-with ours, or anyone else’s experience. We just have to provide unconditional love and support, guiding them as best we can.”

“We can only do our best and hold our hands up when we make a mistake, by the way Sirius you made one tonight. You basically intimidated Harry that it was all right to fool around with other girls, upsetting the three of them. I would give them time to cool down before trying to apologise, it will probably be safer.” Maia offered.

“I was only trying to lighten the mood, I love those two girls as much as I do Harry and would hate to see any of them hurt.”

“Try and do it before they head to bed, you don’t want to leave this to fester or it could get much worse.”

Sirius nodded in agreement with Emma and headed off to find his godson and his wives, better to clear the air tonight.

-oOoOo-

Amelia and Augusta were standing with a healer in a secure ward in St Mungo’s, discussing the patient lying unconscious on the bed, “Getting hit with multiple stunners at his great age is very bad, and there is also damage to his magical core, whether from the spells or something else I can’t say. At this moment in time all I can be certain of is he won’t be leaving that bed anytime soon.”

Augusta desperately wanted to get some Veritaserum into the old goat but she would bide her time, she really couldn’t criticise the aurors for stunning the most wanted wizard in Britain and could only hope Dumbledore recovered enough to stand trial.

They thanked the healer before leaving, “Have you heard from Susan?” Augusta asked.

“Yes, apparently she had a wonderful weekend and wants to continue her lessons there, they have also been invited to Florida to celebrate Lady Hermione’s birthday, I said yes to both.”

Augusta was nodding in agreement, “I got an owl from Neville that would appear to be much the same, he said it was great to be taught by experts. Even though we’ve put better personnel into Hogwarts it was my intention to allow these lessons to continue, if nothing else it lets Neville see a side of life I’m ill equipped and frankly too set in my ways to show him.” Amelia stared at her friend, “Oh don’t give me that look, we both know it’s true, I just have the courage to say it.”

Amelia was now smiling, "Susan did mention that they had really enjoyed learning all sorts of muggle stuff but that the Potters very much had a foot in both camps, I really don't know enough about the muggle world to comment on that but our charges are learning experiences we can't give them and making friends at the same time, I intend to encourage her as much as possible. If we could open more people's eyes to what's out there we may finally put an end to this pureblood supremacy nonsense."

This was one subject that the women were in complete agreement, both were purebloods and proud of their heritage but that didn't define them, both knew it was your actions in life that defined you as a person, not an accident of birth.

-oOoOo-

Susan was practically floating along the corridor towards class, Cedric had again approached her today, asking if she'd made any progress. When she answered that she had an idea last night that would hopefully help, the hansom Quidditch captain hugged the young girl in the middle of the corridor before heading off to his own class.

Susan was beginning to think she could get used to this, totally oblivious to the jealous stares emanating from quite a few disgruntled females, Katie Bell whispering 'Way to go girl!' in her ear as she passed brought home the realisation that, between yesterday's kiss and today's hug, most of the school had seen her with Cedric.

She thought for a few seconds and then decided there was nothing to be embarrassed about, if Cedric wanted to kiss and hug her then one thing was for certain, Miss Susan Bones wouldn't be raising any objections.

Draco was sitting at the back of the class wondering who he could possibly talk to, he'd awoke this morning fully clothed, with blood on his hands and feathers stuck to his robe and no idea how they got there. Had his godfather still been around then Draco wouldn't have hesitated but there was no one on the staff he now trusted, certainly not his new head of house, his other option of asking Crabbe, Goyle

or Pansy wasn't even worth considering. You could die of old age by the time you tried to explain anything complicated to Greg or Vince and Pansy's talents were not between her ears, in fact he was not actually sure the girl had any.

His troubles had started ever since he broke into his late father's study, his mother had sealed the room after his death at the Lovegood printing press over three years ago. Malfoy Manor was beginning to recognise him as its rightful owner and therefore allowed him access to the holiest of holies. Telling a child he's forbidden from going somewhere will just make them all the more determined to get in there, Draco had been barred from that room his entire life.

The thrill of gaining entry was tempered by the worry of getting caught by his mother as well as the dawning realisation that this room may have been locked for a reason, some of the items here chilled his blood. He searched through the desk and his hand brushed a release mechanism that also recognised him as the Malfoy heir, a secret compartment popped open in the seemingly solid desk top. Sliding out the tiny drawer he discovered a small book which quickly found its way into his pocket, promising to read it later, Draco decided to quit while he was ahead and get out of there now.

He couldn't contain his disappointment when he discovered the book was blank and threw it in his trunk, only when he decided to keep tabs on Potter did he remember it and began writing in its pages. At first Draco thought it was his father communicating with him, this person wrote exactly like he remembered his father spoke, and the lonely boy had spent hours gaining comfort from writing in the book's blank pages.

Discovering it was not his father was compensated for by realising that here was a mentor that Draco now badly needed, the former Slytherin Head Boy named Tom could offer advice and council to the fatherless, and now godfatherless boy.

This was the first time Draco had been unable to remember anything, his main worry being his hampered ability to lie himself out of a situation when he had no idea what had happened. Tom had described some detection charms he could cast on himself and all

had registered normal, the blood would appear to have belonged to the same creature as the feathers. He would have to write more to Tom tonight, the idea of an owl to his mother never entered his head.

Tom Riddle was so pleased, here was a victim who was depending more and more on him, this should be even easier than he first thought.

-oOoOo-

Hedwig flamed the trio into the great hall Thursday morning and they were immediately greeted by Ginny and Susan, "How did they all take you both being with Harry?" Ginny was desperate to know.

Hermione's body language told them the question had hit a nerve but they were about to find out not for the reason they thought, "Oh they took it very well, so well in fact that we've got a queue of applicants wanting to join us!"

"What? And you didn't tell us about it, where's the sign-up sheet?" Ginny demanded.

Susan shook her head, "Sorry Harry, you are cute but I've got my eye on someone else, I may keep you in mind as back-up though."

It was only when both girls started giggling that Harry was sure they were joking, Hermione decided on some pay-back, "How is Cedric?"

"Oh Susan and Cedric are the talk of the castle, kissing in the great hall and cuddling in the corridors, who knows what they get up to in private!"

Susan was bright red but tenaciously carried on with her idea, "He's desperate for the three of you and Nym to play for Hufflepuff, would you reconsider?"

It was Luna who answered, "I'm sorry Susan we just don't have the time."

She then unveiled part one of her idea, "Could you give the Hufflepuff team a warm-up game like you gave the Gryffindors, they really need it as they're now playing to a massive crowd on Halloween, all the parents have been invited to watch."

The three Potters had a quick discussion over their bond before coming to the decision it was the least they could do. "That would be fine if we can arrange it for this Saturday, Remus and Sirius had a blast so would definitely be up for a repeat performance." Luna turned to Ginny, "Can you play seeker for us?"

The girl actually blushed, "I would have to ask my captain, I'm now the Gryffindor starting seeker."

They three congratulated their friend, "That's great Ginny but just remind Oliver you were our seeker before being his, tell him we have you under contract or something. Ok Susan I'm assuming you want to break this news to Cedric yourself?"

Hermione's comment had Susan turning a colour that any radish would have been proud of, "What do you think Luna, get Susan into a rah-rah skirt and kitted out with some pom-poms, as head cheerleader Cedric would be bound to notice her then!"

It was actually Harry who intervened to save the embarrassed girl, "From what we're hearing Susan is doing just fine on her own, pay no notice to these two Susan, they have been getting teased pretty hard all week."

Hermione was sharply performing her wifely duties, namely correcting her husband, "Teasing doesn't bother us dear, it's the number of girls who want Luna and me to share our husband with them that pisses us off!"

The three Potters and Ginny headed for the greenhouses while Cedric immediately approached Susan, "Well?"

"The Hufflepuff team have a game this Saturday morning at Potter Manor, this will give you a chance to see the Potters and Nym for yourself."

“Will they play for us though?” he anxiously asked.

“At the moment no but I have an idea for that and this is just the first part, I can’t promise Cedric but I will do my best.”

Cedric looked at the utter devotion on this lovely young girls face and couldn’t help but be moved by this quintessential Hufflepuff, the vulnerability expressed there as well brought out the gentleman in him as he drew her in and kissed her forehead, “Susan I never doubted for one minute that you would do anything but your best, I really appreciate everything you’re doing for the Quidditch team.”

Her muffled, “I’m not doing it for the team!” wasn’t meant to be spoken out loud but was still heard by Cedric who then kissed her cheek and whispered ‘Thank-you” in her ear.

Hannah had to collect her friend when Cedric left, she was still standing there watching the spot where he had disappeared out the door, “I would have thought you would have built up some sort of tolerance by this time, Cedric has probably kissed you more than any other girl in the school and that Ravenclaw Chang looks ready to scratch your eyes out.”

“I think I might just have made a fool of myself Hannah.”

“Well there is a long list of girls wishing for a chance to be as foolish as you.”

-oOoOo-

It was a bunch of nervous first years who made there way back into the now repaired greenhouse, memories of the last time they were here still very fresh in their young minds. Professor Sprout exuded confidence but when one young girl started crying Harry thought it was time to lend a hand, or a phoenix to be precise.

Hedwig’s appearance and singing not only relaxed the rest of the class but reassured them as well, especially when she perched on

Harry's shoulder and made it plain she was here for the rest of the lesson. With the white phoenix and Hogwarts new Deputy watching over them the students could forget their worries and concentrate on the lesson being taught.

Nearing the end of the period Professor Sprout was walking amongst the groups when she stopped at the Potter / Weasley bench. "Lord Potter I would like to thank you and Hedwig here for your assistance last week and again today. It was always going to be difficult for this class to come back in here but this beautiful phoenix helped immensely."

"You're very welcome Professor, Susan Bones is arranging with Cedric Diggory for the Hufflepuff team to play a practice match against us this Saturday morning at the manor, would you like to come along? We would really like you to meet our family and I'm sure that Maia would have something in her greenhouses that you would like a cutting from."

That was an invitation Pomona couldn't resist, "I would be delighted and thank you for helping our Quidditch team, even Cedric would be the first to admit they need all the help they can get."

Minerva McGonagall was so looking forward to this class, her friend Filius hadn't stopped raving about the Potters use of magic in his lesson last week and this was her opportunity to observe first hand. Apparently they had managed to teach the basics of their technique to Ginny Weasley in a period and, with the girl now starting seeker for Gryffindor the impact they had made on her life already was amazing. Minerva couldn't contain a chuckle as she thought that they had hit Hogwarts like a tornado, blowing away three teachers and the headmaster, she was drawn from her thoughts as the bell rang and they all trooped into class as she began her 'no nonsense in my classroom' spiel before handing out the matches.

Ginny was sitting with Luna and determined to put into practice what Hermione had taught her last week in Charms, she imagined the needle in her mind and really focused on it before waving her wand over the match while allowing her magic to flow, looking at her task she saw a perfect needle and an astonished Professor McGonagall.

“Twenty points to Gryffindor Miss Weasley for astonishing work, Lady Hermione would appear to be an inspirational teacher, are you sure my job is safe?” she asked jokingly.

None of the now blushing Potters answered as they casually waved their wands over the matches, leaving three identical needles on the bench. Minerva had a fun period as she ran them through most of the first year spells, the Potters coped easily and towed Ginny along with them, any trouble she had was soon resolved by Luna rather than Hogwarts new headmistress. Minerva would have to speak to Pomona and Filius about assessing what level the Potters were actually at, there seemed little point in them wasting time in first year when their abilities appeared easily beyond that. If possible she would like the youngest Weasley to move on with them, striving to keep up with her friends was pushing the young witch to excel, just a pity they weren't friends with her brother. That was one floo call she would be looking forward to making to the Weasley household, the fact that Ronald wasn't coping with second year work was not, both Weasleys could end up swapping classes which would not go down well with the youngest brother.

At the end of the class the three said goodbye to Ginny and removed their robes to reveal casual muggle clothes, Luna answered a questioning raised eyebrow from McGonagall. “We have a class at our other school in twenty minutes, Emma is waiting for us in the car and Hedwig will take us to her location. Unfortunately we can't just appear in the middle of the hall, well not without hundreds of questions we aren't allowed to answer so we have to arrive by car.”

Hermione was placing her robe into what looked like an ordinary bag, “These were especially made for us, the bags have a secret hidden compartment that we can keep all our magical stuff in while still holding our books for normal school.”

The three then flashed out with their astonishing phoenix leaving Minerva standing there wondering if it was just Hogwarts they were having this affect on or could it actually pass into the wider wizarding world? She had even noticed Mr Longbottom walking about a bit straighter, but that may also be due to the fact that Severus Snape

was no longer in the castle, while the Bones / Diggory saga had even been mentioned in the staff room. She hoped their family would come along to the open day on Halloween, it would be nice to see Sirius and Remus again and she also remembered Maia as being one of Filius's favourite students. Yes there was a totally different atmosphere in the castle now and which the Potters had been the catalyst for change.

-oOoOo-

Emma had parked in a quiet spot of the multi-story car park only five minutes drive from Wyedean school, Hedwig delivered the trio who piled into the car and greeted their little sister, "She wouldn't stay at home when she heard I was coming to pick you up." Danni wasn't caring, Harry was sitting in the front with her and anytime he lavished attention on the toddler made her very happy.

They soon arrived and all three left the car reluctantly, Harry was going to have to do something about this, his girls were unhappy and that was not a situation he was prepared to allow. Jillian must have been waiting on them arriving because she sprang over and actually took Harry by the arm and made to lead him away, he stood firm. "Jillian, what are you playing at?"

"Oh Harry I wanted to talk to you about my party tomorrow night, surely Luna and Hermione told you I wanted to join and be your girlfriend to."

"I have no intention of taking any more girlfriends, Luna and Hermione may be prepared to share but I'm not. They both are all I've ever wanted and I simply don't feel that way about anyone else, sorry Jillian but all I have to offer is friendship."

The raven haired beauty was flabbergasted, "But Harry it's my birthday, and I've told everyone you're going with me."

Harry had two girls in his head advising him to hold his temper but they weren't entirely successful, "Who gave you the right to decide that? You stepped over the line Jillian and it would now be too

awkward for us to be there tomorrow night so I apologise for the short notice but we will not be attending.” Harry removed the girls hand from his arm before taking both Luna and Hermione’s hands and walked away from the stunned girl.

The three were having an argument across their bond, “Harry, don’t you think you were a little rough on her?” asked Hermione.

“No, it needed to be said, we’re not some freak show available for birthday parties and Bar Mitzvah’s, need a date? Then one of us will do it. Had that been a guy deciding one of you was going to be his date because you both go out with me, I would have decked him! They’re treating me in the same way, because I have two girlfriends I will go with anyone, it stops right now and maybe my beautiful wives will be happy again.”

“Hermione, I agree with Harry. Had the positions been reversed and it was us that were being hit on, we both know what Harry’s reaction would be and that’s exactly what we would want him to do, he’s our boyfriend meaning we’re off limits to other boys so it should be the same for him.”

“I’m not arguing with that, it was just a bit harsh the day before her birthday.”

“What would have been harsh was me going along with the charade, eventually hurting Jillian but more importantly hurting the both of you, there is no way I could do that.”

This earned him two kisses which were needed to fortify them as they went to face the rest of their friends, they hadn’t exactly been rushing so Jillian had beaten them to it, Jamie and Claire came towards them while Matt appeared to be spoiling for a fight.

“Jillian told us you’re no longer going to her party, is this true?” Claire asked.

“Yes, since she told everyone I would be there as her boyfriend it would be just too awkward for both of us, as well as Hermione and

Luna. All my girlfriend vacancies have been well and truly filled by the two girls with me now.”

Both looked shocked at this revelation, “She didn’t tell us you were going to be her boyfriend, we all know that’s what she wants but why would she say it?” Jamie puzzled.

It was like a light bulb illuminating Claire’s eyes, “To guilt trip Harry into saying yes, she must have freaked out when Mr Noble here sent her away with a flea in her ear. She would have expected you just to agree so not to hurt her feelings and probably played the birthday card as well, you three are really serious about each other aren’t you?”

Hermione slipped her arm around Harry’s waist before answering, “Yes Claire we are, we know this is not what’s usually considered ‘normal’ but it works for us. All three of us are officially off the boyfriend / girlfriend market and that’s the way we want it. Jillian needed it spelled out for her so that’s what Harry was forced into doing, we all like her but only as a friend.”

Harry was shaking his head, “Guilt trip? I live with Maia, Cas, Emma, my two girlfriends and little sister yet I swear I’ll never understand girls.”

Luna’s arm made its way around him as well, “Harry you’re not supposed to understand us, just kiss us as required?”

“I think I can cope with that,” the three left to give the group time to sort out the new information, they would meet them later in class.

-oOoOo-

Sirius emerged with tickets in hand, truth be told he hated ballet but Maia, Cas and especially Emma loved it so he would just suffer in silence. Maia and him were getting along great but he was still worried about Emma feeling left out so this would be a treat for all off them. Sirius still cringed the first time he accompanied the women and couldn’t believe his eyes at what the men were wearing.

His 'joke' about that being there so the women could stand on it during their lifts went down like a lead balloon; it also backfired when he found a 'dance belt' amongst his Christmas presents that year. Mortified was a fair description of opening it in front of everybody before realizing what it was, it was at least Easter before the teasing stopped.

He would have dinner with three beautiful ladies, endure Swan Lake and then get to say goodnight to Maia – the best part of the evening. Things between them were going so well that he was even considering a ring for her finger, he just hoped he wasn't misreading the situation because he was falling for Maia in a very big way.

-oOoOo-

Jillian couldn't even look in the trio's direction as she entered the class while Matt appeared ready to apologise though, since he hadn't done anything, that was going to be waved away and forgotten about.

Harry was being mentally berated about 'poor Jillian' and 'she's been crying' by his wives for the entire period so that, by the time the last bell rang, he had his defences at maximum which just seemed to annoy his girls more, he could no longer hear their specific thoughts, just the odd word and the fact that they were definitely peeved at him.

Jillian approached the now tense trio, "Harry I need to apologise to you for my behaviour earlier, I had no right to say the things I did. I hope we can still be friends and would really like the three of you to be at my party, it won't be the same if you're not there."

Harry's rarely used defences were taking a battering as both girls fought to make their opinions known but he was going to say what he wanted to say, "Jillian what you tried to do today is not something that one friend should do to another..."

He was interrupted by his girls who'd had enough of being ignored, "Jillian I will be there," said Hermione, quickly followed by Luna proclaiming the same.

Jillian turned her attention to Harry with tears in her eyes, he had lost all colour in his features at his wives declarations without even letting him finish what he wanted to say. To him they were playing the same game that Jillian was guilty of earlier and this had never happened between the trio before, "I'm sorry Jillian, you lied to me to try and force me into something I didn't want to do, I accept your apology but it's going to take time to rebuild a friendship, certainly not before tomorrow night so I'm afraid I won't be there."

Harry walked away leaving three stupefied and speechless girls behind.

Emma didn't need a degree in parenting for her senses to start screaming something was wrong as Harry entered the car, apart from his expression and demeanour the three were always together, this could be bad.

"Where are Hermione and Luna?"

"Talking to Jillian," was his only reply as he played with a delighted Danni, Emma then caught sight of the two girls heading towards the car and had to up her earlier estimate, this could be very bad. Hermione looked ready to explode while Emma had no yardstick to measure Luna against, she didn't think she'd ever seen the girl angry before.

They both got in the back of the car and slammed the door shut, this was the signal for Hermione to let loose, "Harry James Potter you left that girl in tears back there, she knows she made a mistake and apologised for it. We tried to tell you all afternoon what she was feeling but since when do we start blocking one another?"

Harry's temper flared as he'd had enough of being the bad guy here, "Hermione Jane Potter I started blocking when my feelings were being ignored by you two in favour of not further upsetting poor Jillian, you're so smart so answer me this, since when did we put other peoples feelings before one of ours? You both made your positions quite clear and so have I, kindly stay out of my head as holding you both out is giving me a blinding headache!"

Danni turned round as far as her car seat would allow to glare at her big sisters, "Hermi and Lulu bad to Harry, make him angry!" The toddler then reached for her brother's hand in the silence that ensued, Emma started the car and began the drive home, figuring to give tempers time to cool before asking questions. A glance in the rear view mirror showed two girls very close to tears, all anger had left them at Harry's outburst, there was going to be no quick fix for this.

Harry had refused to be drawn all evening and had chatted away to Danni all through dinner, politely answering anyone who asked him a direct question but saying nothing of consequence. He then sat separate from the girls in the library and finished all his homework before choosing a book to read, when his wives said goodnight to his grandparents Harry just sat where he was as they headed off to their room.

It was Martha who had to speak out, watching the three of them in pain was not something she could endure, "Harry you're bonded to those girls and this hurts you every bit as much as it does them, you have to talk this through with them son."

"That's the problem Gran, they made their decisions without talking to me or considering my feelings on the matter, we've never done that before and I'm terrified what it could mean. Could they like someone else more than they like me? This feels worse than any time I spent in that cupboard but that would kill me Gran, losing even one of them would tear me to pieces."

The tears were freely flowing down his cheeks now as Cas popped into the library, "Excuse me Sir, Madam, but I have need of your grandson." She grabbed Harry by the shoulder and popped him into his bathroom, where the giant sunken bath currently held two crying witches.

"I will not stand back and watch members of my family hurt each other, get this sorted NOW!" with a snap of her fingers had Harry's clothes disappearing and she literally flung him into the bath. "No one leaves this room until you repair the damage your stupidity, pride or

whatever else you want to blame caused. You are bonded and to ignore one another is not only painful but dangerous, I will do whatever it takes to protect my family even if it means forcing you to see sense here.” They all heard the door lock as she left.

Harry managed to stop spluttering long enough to say, “Eh Hi!” to the crying girls, it was hardly a sonnet from Shakespeare or a poem from Robbie Burns but to the girls it was more than enough. Harry soon had his arms full of two naked and still crying witches, but it was their presence once more in his mind that made him rejoice! Tonight for the first time since he met his girls Harry had felt alone, that was not a feeling he ever wanted to be acquainted with again.

Their thoughts were jumbled up as all three tried to apologise for everything they could think of at the same time, when the hugs began to include kisses then their troubles just drained away as Luna discovered she had a whole new improved version of her happy place, which was only going to get better as she grew like Hermione.

The emotions emanating from the bath permeated throughout the Manor as the mounting tension dispersed as if it never was, all thoughts of a certain party were forgotten by the three, in fact their only conscious thought was that they would have to do something very special for Cas, she was just the best.

-oOoOo-

Far away in another country, another girl was also in water but in quite different circumstances, she was shivering because she was terrified. The last time Myrtle had heard that hissing voice in this toilet was also the last time she drew breath, the two facts were not coincidental. She'd left this very cubicle that last time to shout at the male voice she'd heard hissing in the girl's toilet only to meet her death by a pair of giant yellow eyes, even though she'd been a ghost for almost half a century, Myrtle had no intention of leaving her beloved U bend tonight for any reason.

-oOoOo-

Chance couldn't contain his chuckle as he watched the blond boy enter the chamber, this should wipe that constant smirk off Fate's face. He was sick of listening to the bitch boasting about her golden trio which is why he took action in the first place, he decided to make himself scarce before he was caught.

Fate emerged from the shadows after he had left and watched as the blond boy explored the chamber, Chance had manufactured this situation but she would ensure that it ended with extreme prejudice. They were about to find out just how big a bitch Fate could be and she wouldn't be leaving anything to Chance.

A/N Thanks for reading.

Next chapter to be posted will be Chapter 7 of Can't.

Chapter 11

Harry lay in bed with a wife in each arm and knew it was time to talk, he could sense Hermione and Luna were both awake but afraid to say anything for fear of reopening the wounds of yesterday, he kissed each girl on the forehead before speaking, "Ok then, I'll go first, just please don't interrupt and let me get it all out. I'm sorry for trying to block you out yesterday, had I just explained my feelings to you both then this whole thing could have been avoided. Instead I got angry that you two appeared to be focusing on what Jillian was feeling while ignoring mine, I also apologise for deciding that all three of us would not be going to the party without consulting you first, that was wrong of me."

The girls were clinging to him now as he took a deep breath before continuing, "I will not apologise for what I said to Jillian, she lied with the sole purpose of manipulating me, two of the things you both know I hate. I will try to rebuild our friendship, she did apologise after all but it will take some time and also for her to realise that I can't be her boyfriend. In all honesty I don't think I could stomach her party tonight but will listen to what you both have to say on that."

He kissed both his wives again before settling back to hear what they had to say, Hermione went next, "Harry I'm so sorry I let my temper get the better of me, if I'd just stayed calm and looked at the problem from different angles then all of this could have been avoided. I was so sure I was right that I just never gave any other options a thought, something I'll need to work on in the future. All I could see was a girl hurting and, having been hurt many times before I met you both, I was desperate to help. So desperate that it blinkered me from the hurt I was causing the people I love with all my heart, so determined that I emotionally dragged Luna along with me, for that I can only truly and deeply say how sorry I am to both of you."

Harry was running his fingers through both girls hair and used his hand to turn the tearful Hermione's face towards him for a kiss, she once more snuggled into her husband as Luna began to talk, "I won't let you take all the blame Hermione, like you I saw our friend hurting yet totally ignored our husband's pain and for that I feel ashamed. Harry has shown me nothing but love and kindness since the moment

we met yet I feel I betrayed him yesterday. We've been repeatedly told to be careful because our bond magnifies our emotions towards one another but this is the first time we have experienced the negative side of that, if we hurt one another then it really bloody hurts!"

A tearful Luna now required a kiss from her husband before she could continue, "Until Cas threw you into our bath I had no idea what to do to fix the problem, it felt like a vital part of me was missing and I could barely function without it. Harry you were right to come down hard on Jillian yesterday, she wasn't taking no for an answer and our relationship has to be protected. The thought of you kissing another girl the way you do us would rip my heart out, this dating others nonsense is well and truly over!"

She was blushing before she could say the next bit, "About last night, is that our new limit?"

Hermione's hand was on her cheek, soothing the girl, "Luna you're the youngest so the limit is set where ever you're happy with, you know that."

"Oh I was very happy with the new limit, just no further for a while?"

This earned her hugs and kisses from both her bond mates, "Whatever you say love, we did get a bit carried away and we could even take it back a bit if you wanted?"

"Don't even think about that Harry, I'm already looking forward to tonight!"

This brought to the fore the problem they were still faced with, the birthday party tonight, "Ok lets talk about what we've got here, both Luna and I have said we will go and, while I don't want to attend, I wouldn't feel comfortable turning up in school this afternoon and saying sorry but I'm not going anymore. Harry has, quite rightly said he's not going so how do we handle this?"

Luna offered a suggestion, "What if we both went but only stayed an hour or so, kind of show face but don't pretend that everything is fine between us just yet?"

Hermione shrugged, "I've got nothing better than that."

Harry was aware that he was only partially responsible for the mess they got themselves into yesterday but he had just been given an opportunity to repair a lot of the damage caused, in the back of his mind was the thought that it was Hermione's party next week and he would hate for any bad feelings to spill over to affect that, he made his offer. "If we were going on those headings then I could accompany my beautiful girls, providing Jillian realises that I'm off the boyfriend market."

For an answer he received two squeals of joy and many, many kisses that only stopped when Cas popped into the room, but this was not a Cas the trio recognised. The little elf was standing demurely, with her head down and wringing her hands with worry, "Master Harry, Mistress's Hermione and Luna, Cas is very sorry for what she did last night, I should never eep..."

The little elf found herself wrapped up in a hug so tight that her feet were lifted off the floor and Harry didn't appear to be in any hurry to put her down. "Cas what you did last night was necessary, we'd stopped talking to each other and the problem was only going to get worse. While I admire your actions, your method could use a bit of work, I am quite capable of entering the bath by myself you know."

Cas let out a half hearted chuckle before burying her head into Harry's chest and bursting into tears, she had her arms wrapped tightly around the boy who was the centre of her world. "I thought I would be getting clothes this morning but I just couldn't watch you all hurting."

"The only clothes you'll be getting are ones you choose for yourself out of Harrods, go and treat yourself on me, don't think I haven't noticed that you haven't bought Danni anything for at least two days, getting neglectful you are!" the large smile and both arms wrapped around her took any hint of disapproval from his words.

“Hem-hem, can we have our husband back please Cas?”

“Yes it’s a Hogwarts day so we don’t need to get up for at least another fifteen minutes.”

Harry’s eyes sparkled as he gently returned her feet to the ground before kissing the top of her head and then jumping back into the arms of his wives, it was a much happier Cas who popped out the room.

-oOoOo-

Charms that morning was like a repeat of Transfiguration, Professor Flitwick gave the class a charm to work on and the four at the front completed it almost immediately, Filius then began to run through the entire first year course with the Potters and youngest Weasley. Ginny was working with Hermione again and could feel her control improving even as the tasks got harder, the little professor was delighted at the prowess these four students were displaying, especially Miss Weasley who was soaking up everything Lady Hermione said like a sponge.

Minerva was right, first year courses were no use to them and Miss Weasley’s determination and work rate were exemplarily. She must also be a bright and powerful young witch to accomplish what she was doing here today, the Potters were in a different league altogether and he would surly love to watch them duelling.

The class ended and Ginny let out a sigh of relief, she had really enjoyed the lesson but was now knackered, she felt Hermione’s hand on her arm, “It’s very tiring at first and you have to be careful not to overdo it, it’s taken us three years of hard work to get to this level.”

They arrived in the great hall where Susan managed to introduce Cedric and the Quidditch team without blushing, the twins of course couldn’t resist a bit of friendly banter with their next opponents and Harry noticed Oliver Wood hovering along the edges of the group.

“Something I can help you with Oliver?”

“Yes, I’m not happy about my seeker being used to help the opposition.”

Harry raised his eyebrow, “Your seeker? I assume you are talking about Ginny who is the Gryffindor seeker as far as I’m led to believe. Correct me if I’m wrong but you wouldn’t have even known her name if it wasn’t for the fact that we invited the Gryffindor team for a friendly match last week, a game you lost by the way.”

Harry couldn’t resist tweaking his nose slightly, “Now I thought that was quite a good demonstration of inter-house unity but you apparently don’t feel up to returning the spirit of co-operation.”

Ginny tweaked Oliver’s nose even further out of joint, “He threatened to take away the starting seeker position he’d just given me the day before, I told him that was fine by me as, with my extra studies I will be very busy all year, he changed his mind after that.”

Both twins immediately turned on their captain, mentally running through their filing cabinet of pranks for the most appropriate one, Harry was just shaking his head in dismay, “Oliver you have to realise that Quidditch is just a game, you may obsess over it but not everyone else does. Threatening your seeker is not the best way to get them to perform, ‘catch the snitch or die trying’ in a school game is a bit much don’t you think?”

The twins had regaled them with Oliver’s pre-match speeches last weekend, “Neither would be asking her to spy on the ‘opposition’ as you called my Hufflepuff housemates.”

Cedric had the good grace to look embarrassed as Ginny gave him a dirty look, “I told him I was nobody’s spy Harry, you can bet Susan hasn’t said anything to Cedric about how Gryffindor played, apart from the fact we beat them.”

Susan answered honestly, “No I haven’t and Cedric is too much of a gentleman to even ask, his only concern was on the abilities of the

Hufflepuffs playing in that match, and I sought out their permission before saying anything about them. Are you sure you're in the right house Mr Woods because that's not how I thought Gryffindor's conducted themselves?"

Susan had left Oliver floundering, the twins chuckling and Cedric very surprised and impressed with this young witch's tenacity in defending him, her house and friends.

Two boys at opposite ends of just about everything, including the great hall were watching the proceedings concerning the Potters with great interest, Ron Weasley watched someone who had it all and didn't care, he'd heard from the Gryffindor team that Potter, Looney and the scary witch would all be in any Quidditch team in Hogwarts but didn't want to play because they were too busy with school work. What was wrong with these people? Only the thought of another howler from his mother kept Ron's mouth closed but it was a close run thing.

Draco Malfoy also coveted the attention, respect and adulation, his father used to tell him stories of how he'd run the school while at Hogwarts and his son would do the same when his time came. Unfortunately his father never got to see Draco set off for Hogwarts and the Malfoy name was no longer what it once was, his father being publicly branded a death eater and half their fortune going to the Lovegood nee Potter bint had seen to that. With his godfather now gone the only people who paid the slightest bit of attention to anything he said were the bookends and Pansy, when Potter spoke the whole school hung on his every word. He was standing talking with two Quidditch captains yet Marcus Flint had laughed at him when he put his name forward for seeker, Tom had told him he could make the house of Malfoy great again with the name Draco on everyone's lips, this was his greatest desire.

The girls were arranging with Susan and Ginny when they, the Quidditch team and Professor Sprout would be picked up tomorrow while Nym would just call Cas when she wanted to go to the manor.

"You all ready for the party tonight?" Ginny asked and got silence in return. "What happened?"

Luna explained and Susan got angry, "Let me see if I've got this right, Jillian tried to get off with Harry, he told her a very firm no and you both fought with him over it? I would have kissed him then smacked her."

Ginny held her hands up, "Don't look at me, I already gave you my opinion and it was pretty close to Susan's, wish I'd thought of the kiss bit though!"

Hermione was quickly coming around to their way of thinking, "Harry actually apologised to us and is accompanying Luna and me tonight, we need to make this up to him Luna."

"Cas is in Harrods and she's fantastic at anticipating our needs, I think we can expect some new outfits to put a smile on Harry's face. I don't intend to leave his arm all the time we are there." Hermione agreed with her bond mate.

Harry had pulled the twins aside, "Padfoot asked me to give you this," Harry handed over a communications mirror, "You say 'Padfoot' into it."

Both twins looked as if Harry had just handed them the crown jewels, Sirius and Remus had told them about these and now they had one of their own, "He said he had some business to discuss with you and we can use them to arrange pick-up for both of you and Neville for Potions tomorrow." Fred and George could only nod, instant access to their heroes using a device invented by them had unbelievably left the twins speechless.

Hedwig flamed them home as they had more time today before their next class, more time to prepare to see their friends.

-oOoOo-

Emma watched as the kids left the car, there was an air of determination about them today, she marvelled as usual that Hermione was on Harry's left and Luna on his right, they even slept in bed like that. She'd asked them once why that was and the trio just

looked at her as if she was stupid, "Mum! That's where we fit." Her daughter had answered and that was the end of the matter.

They had all been worried last night at the first fight they could remember them having, what made it worse was that it was over someone else. It was always going to be difficult for them to break their relationship to their friends but hadn't in their wildest dreams foreseen other girls wanting to join in.

Jonathon and Martha had heard from Cas what she did last night and couldn't wait to tell them at breakfast, Maia, Sirius and her were all shocked at the elf's actions, even more shocked that it worked. Cas was the only one who could have got away with that, anyone else even attempting it would have found a volley of curses heading in their direction.

The three had told them what their plans were for tonight and both she and Maia though it was a very mature decision to reach, Sirius was saying nothing after his disaster the other night, Emma just hoped their friends took it well.

They arrived at their usual hang-out spot to find their friends waiting on them, Harry had brought his gift along in case things went badly and he actually didn't go tonight, "Happy birthday Jillian," as he handed the gift over, no birthday kiss or hug.

The girl was fighting back the tears as she removed the wrapping to reveal a signed replica shirt of her favourite football team, Barcelona F.C. "We visited the Nou Camp during our holidays and I picked it up there."

Normally she would have hugged him and kissed his cheek in thanks but the girls he had on either arm gave a clear message that would not be happening, Harry Potter was off limits unless you were named Hermione or Luna. "Thank you Harry I love it and again I'm so sorry for yesterday, is there anything I can do to make you change your mind about tonight? We all know Hermione and Luna don't want to go if you're not going to be there."

Both his girls were staying out of his head, they would offer advice only if asked because this was Harry's show to run, "If you can accept that we will only ever be friends then we can move on and the three of us will come over for a while tonight. I told you yesterday it will take time but none of us want to lose your friendship Jillian. You have to understand though I'm with Hermione and Luna now and that's not going to change."

The first hint of a smile appeared on Jillian's face, "Thanks, it's more than I deserve, I was so obsessed with being number three it nearly cost me all my friends. Instead I have a Barca shirt with number seven on the back and my seven best friends will be with me on my birthday, I'm a lucky girl."

The bell had them all moving to class as a lot of tension left the group, things weren't back to normal yet but at least they were moving in the right direction.

-oOoOo-

The first thing Susan and Ginny did when they arrived Saturday morning was to seek out Luna and Hermione, "Well, how did it go?"

That both girls were smiling gave the two young witches their clue, "It went rather well actually, Cas had bought the both of us new outfits that made Harry's eyes light up and his dark green silk shirt with black jeans had our hearts doing back-flips. We arrived fashionably late, stayed on his arm all night then left just before everyone else, things are getting better and the message that we're together is out there." Hermione answered.

"Are things ok between you two and Harry?" Ginny asked.

Luna's eyes glazing over and her beautiful smile said a lot more than the "Oh yes," that escaped her lips, Hermione's blushes also added to the mix that had Ginny and Susan giggling with laughter.

Harry was introducing Professor Sprout to Emma, Maia and of course Danni, a quick kiss for luck from his favourite sister and he was away to prepare for the match.

The three girls also left to get ready as Cedric approached Susan, "Does your plan for this require us playing any certain way?"

"Cedric I want the team to play at its best, don't try to second guess anything, just do everything you can to win."

"Do you think there's any chance we can win?"

"Only if you catch the snitch in the first few minutes!"

Cedric smiled at her honesty before hugging Susan, "I hope your idea, whatever it is works."

Blushing furiously she kissed him on the cheek, "For luck!" and walked away leaving the boy watching her for a change, if Susan knew Cedric was standing there wondering why it felt so natural to hug her then she would have floated over to the women who were getting ready to watch the game.

The balls were released and Cas threw up the quaffle to start the match, it was train wreck Quidditch, the Potters had each scored a goal in the first two minutes and it went downhill for Hufflepuff from there.

Maia was suspicious, "Susan is the Hufflepuff team always this bad?"

"I can only speak for last year and that would be a resounding yes, they didn't win a game. That's how Cedric ended up captain while a fourth year, no one else in Hufflepuff wanted the job."

Pomona backed up Susan's assessment, "It's over five years since our team last won a match, the three other teams try to rack up a high score against us in case the cup is decided on points, though I've never seen Hufflepuff play against a team as good as this one."

It was painful to the spectators and, had it been a boxing match the referee would have stopped it long ago. Hufflepuff's three chasers could hardly pass the quaffle to each other, the goalkeeper looked

afraid to take his hands from his broom in case he fell off and, while the beaters could at least hit the bludgers, they possessed no knowledge of where they should be directing them. Having a seeker as captain was also exposed as a weakness, Cedric spent most of his time trying to organise the team to put up some kind of fight where all Ginny had to do was concentrate on finding the golden snitch.

Maia was chatting with Susan, "When you mentioned Cedric and said he was Quidditch captain, I assumed he was at least a sixth year and it was just a crush you had on him, he seems quite taken with you?"

Susan was blushing again, "Cedric is only two years older than me and has been talking with me all week in the hope I can help convince Harry, Hermione, Luna and Nym to play for the Quidditch team. I expect, after today it will be a nod in the corridor as he passes while trying to remember my name."

Maia smiled at the girl, "Don't sell yourself short, you're a beautiful young witch and from the way Cedric was looking at you I'm sure he'll not be forgetting your name any time soon. Emma and I never got to do this with our daughters as they just went straight to marriage with Harry so if you need anyone to talk to please consider us, and no we won't say a word to anyone. Now how do you plan on getting them all to play for Hufflepuff?"

When Ginny caught the snitch while Cedric was trying to coach the beaters the final score was four hundred and twenty to nil, Hufflepuff had only managed two shots on goal, and one of them missed!

The teams flew down and once again Cas and Dobby had refreshments waiting on them as Ziggy cleared the equipment away.

One of the Hufflepuff chasers was almost in tears, "I'm sorry Cedric, it's bad enough knowing you are going to lose but with my parents in the crowd and every one laughing at us I can't do this. We have the three best chasers I've ever seen already in Hufflepuff, surely you could convince them?"

It was Luna who answered the upset girl, "I'm sorry Cindy but we just don't have the time with our studies, we only spend two mornings a week in Hogwarts so I don't see how it could work."

Susan took a deep breath, this was what she had been waiting for, "If that is your only problem what if it could be solved?"

Hermione glanced around at her team mates before answering, "If it could be solved then we might be interested, what are you up to Susan?"

"Well I assumed that the time issues were more to do with team practices and not the actual match, what if you four just turned up on the day of the match and played? You would probably be coming to watch anyway so it's not taking up anymore of your time and I don't think anybody could ever coach what you three do , would that be alright with you Cedric?"

The Hufflepuff Quidditch captain was staring opened mouthed at Susan with a mixture of admiration and adoration clearly displayed on his face, so they took that as a yes.

Harry asked the four players they would be replacing if they didn't mind stepping down, four grinning impressions of those nodding animals people put at the back windows of their cars followed. Harry looked for any objections amongst them and it was Nym who said what they all were thinking, "I would be at the game anyway, it's the couple of nights a week practicing that I didn't have time for."

"Ok Cedric if that's acceptable to you we'll play!"

The delighted captain shook all of their hands before grabbing Susan and spinning her around, "You're amazing!" the kiss that followed was only on her cheek but the blushes coming from both of them told their own story.

Maia had been watching carefully and thought she could help Susan out a bit, "Cedric, next week is Hermione's birthday and we're having a party on the beach, would you like to come."

He glanced at Susan who, for whatever reason was still in his arms, "The beach is in Florida and I'm already invited."

"Mrs Lovegood I would be delighted to go, thank you very much for asking."

It was a much relieved bunch of Hufflepuffs who headed back to Hogwarts, Sirius and Remus had a talk with Cedric about the beaters, giving him some batting exercises to work on with them.

The Hufflepuff captain's head was spinning after a quite incredible morning, his team had just been humiliated and yet he'd seldom been happier. There were simply no words to describe how the Potters played and while it was true he never really got to assess Tonks in goals, Susan said she was good and that would do for him.

He was unclear about the situation with Susan, did he just get a girlfriend? It certainly felt like they were going on a date next week so maybe he should ask her just to make it official, he certainly liked her enough. "Hey, any of you guys know where Florida is and what you wear to a party on a beach?"

It was muggle born Cindy who answered, "Florida is on the East Coast of America and if you're going to a beach party there it will be swimming shorts or trunks."

Cedric's teenage brain suddenly pictured stunning Susan in her swimming costume and his mind was made up, he would ask the beautiful girl before someone else beat him to it. He was just wondering how he was going to tell his parents and get his permission slip signed when his dad's probable reaction had him shaking his head in dread.

His father was very proud of him but he could be a little over the top sometimes, telling him that he was going to the Potters for a party with Susan Bones as a date would probably be too much for Amos Diggory, either that or he'd take a full page ad in the Prophet telling the world how wonderful Cedric was - this called for a letter home to mum.

Professor Sprout was staying as she needed to chat with the three adults while Maia had a word in an excited Susan's ear, "Oh I think he'll definitely remember your name now, you may just have a boyfriend shortly, especially when Cas picks you a tasteful bathing suit for next week. Only one thing though, I'm assuming Cedric's a gentleman otherwise he's in for a long swim back to Scotland!"

Nothing was going to take the smile off Susan's face today, "Everyone knows who my guardian is, no one will try and take any liberties when the Head of the DMLE is my Aunt Amelia. Cedric is a very nice boy and she will probably give him the third degree the first chance she gets, I just hope she doesn't scare Cedric off now that I've got him interested in me."

-oOoOo-

Minerva had Molly and Arthur Weasley in the Headmistress's office, she decided to get the unpleasant task over with first.

"There were three students that did very badly last year and I wanted to make them repeat first year, since they were all purebloods Albus over-ruled me, the result is these three second year boys just aren't coping with the harder coursework. Unfortunately Ronald is one of them."

Both parents didn't know what to say, this had never happened to them before and Ron was one of seven Weasley children to come through the gates of Hogwarts.

"I've checked with his Professors and they all say the same thing, Ronald pays little or no attention, is incredibly lazy and not coping in their classes. The thought of offering extra work so he could catch up is a non starter because he rarely does the work assigned him now, it would just be more homework for him to dodge doing."

The parents exchanged glances before Arthur asked, "What are our options Minerva?"

“Ronald staying in second year is not an option, this leaves repeating first year or removing him from Hogwarts and home schooling.”

Molly was not having one of her children thrown out of Hogwarts because they were too bloody lazy to learn, “We’ll take the repeat option Minerva though I don’t know how he’ll handle being in the same class as Ginny.”

Minerva smiled at them, “That was something else I wanted to talk to you about, Ginny has been working with the Potter girls in each class and they’ve been teaching her how to use her magic without structured spells. Ginny’s picked it up so well that she completed all the first year transfiguration practical work for me in a single lesson.”

The two Weasleys were now stunned, “She’d written home about how much she liked her extra lessons and being made Gryffindor seeker but never mentioned this.”

“She doesn’t know about this move yet, Pomona is at Potter Manor as we speak, talking to their parents about progressing into second year, we think Ginny would benefit from this move as well. Filius ran her through the first year charms, Pomona says she’s a natural at Herbology while she has extra lessons in Potions and Defence with the Potters at the weekend. This type of magic is very rare and we won’t be giving her three foot essays on the levitation charm when she doesn’t need or use it, she just points her wand and wills her magic to do her bidding. She’s already friends with Neville Longbottom and Susan Bones in that year, and of course the three Potters.”

“Isn’t there a danger here of pushing Ginny too hard too quickly?” a concerned Arthur asked.

“Ginny will be closely monitored in all her classes to ensure that she’s coping, you’ve also met the Potters, they will be keeping a close eye on her as well to make sure she doesn’t overdo it. Filius told me that Lady Hermione was cautioning Ginny not to overtax herself and that she has to build up to using her magic gradually, this

was after doing all the first year charms in a single class, we will ensure that level of magic use doesn't happen again. Your daughter is using a form of magic that few on the staff have mastered and her success at learning this from the Potters might even see a total re-think of the way children are taught magic, this is a fantastic opportunity for her."

Molly Weasley was confused, "Minerva I thought that branch of magic could only be taught to a witch or wizard studying under a master, how could mere children teach it to Ginny?"

"That's what's got us so excited Molly, we all thought the same as well but I've seen it with my own eyes, Ginny just concentrates and the button transfigures into a beetle. No spell spoken or structured wand movement, and she's learned it so quickly, we're literally throwing the books away with this one."

The Weasley's agreed the move on the condition that the Potters also accepted before Ron was summoned to break the bad news.

-oOoOo-

Pomona had laid out the proposal to the group and was waiting for feedback, she didn't have long to wait before Luna wanted more details.

"I have a few questions before we go any further, how will this affect our timetable? Our main school has been very accommodating but we can't really go back and ask them to change it all again."

The new Hogwarts deputy had expected this question, "Susan can you tell us when you get Transfiguration, Herbology and Charms?"

"I have Charms on a Thursday morning with both Transfiguration and Herbology on a Friday morning."

Hermione nodded, "That would mean we would now be tight for time on Friday instead of Thursday's but shouldn't be a problem, what

about Ginny though, we're getting on so well in classes that it wouldn't be right to leave her behind."

"I quite agree, that is why Miss Weasley's parents are at this moment in the Headmistress's office discussing her moving up a year as well. You will still share all three classes with her but have Susan and Neville in them as well."

Pomona spoke directly to Ginny, "It will be hard work but you have impressed us greatly and we think that not letting you progress with your friends would be doing you a disservice, well what do you all think?"

Ginny was gob smacked, she'd thought she was going to lose her friends in class only to be offered the chance to move with them, there was only one fly in the ointment. "I really would like to move but I'm not sure how my brother would react to me being in the same class as him."

"Your brother Ronald is being moved down a year due to him struggling with the course work."

"Well then I definitely want to move, he will be raging but at least I won't have to listen to it all day and worry about beating him in classes."

Harry spoke after the trio had all confirmed their opinions over their bond, "We can't see a downside to this, both Hermione and I are of age for second year while Luna missed the cut-off date by a few weeks. So we'll start second year Charms on Thursday morning."

-oOoOo-

Ron really wanted to hit something as he moved into the first year Gryffindor's dorm, he was still unsure just what the hell had happened, one minute he was trouncing Dean at chess and the next his parents and McGonagall were telling him he was going to have to repeat first year.

His initial reaction was that this could be good, because he'd already done the course he could take it even easier this year and it would also give him the chance to get in with Potter. Learning that Ginny and the Potters were moving up a year almost had him wrecking the headmistress's office, well apart from the fact that his mother and McGonagall would probably have murdered him first.

He now had a bed beside chirpy Colin Creevey who went to ridiculous lengths telling Ron how great it was to take classes with the Potters and wasn't he pleased his sister was such great friends with them.

Ron took great delight on ruining the little prick's day by telling him his heroes were transferring into second year, it made him feel slightly better that he'd almost made the boy cry. Ron wondered who the other two students were that also had to repeat first year, he just hoped it was people he could talk to.

In the first year Slytherin dorm Gregory Goyle and Vincent Crabbe were introducing themselves to their new classmates.

A/N Thanks for reading.

Chapter 12

Ginny was worried that she was going to be out of her depth when entering second year until she realised that both Susan and Neville were not that far ahead of her in today's tasks, Maia had changed their potions lesson so that Ginny would have the basic skills needed for beginning second year. Neville was actually enjoying himself and said so to Maia, "Snape never showed us anything like this, potions make's sense when someone actually explains the steps and techniques to you."

Fred and George already knew Ginny's news after speaking to their parents before coming to Potter Manor, they were not surprised at Ron's demotion as even Percy couldn't get the lazy git to study. All were staying the night as the twins had business to discuss with the marauders while Neville and Susan were going to mark the other four's cards on being second years.

When they eventually sat in the library, Luna tried to explain why they were moving into second year, "Neville, can you make this pencil float?"

Neville took out his father's wand, pronounced the spell while doing the wand movement and the pencil rose, much to the boy's relief.

Luna turned to Ginny, "Now you do it."

Ginny just pointed her wand at the pencil and it floated smoothly and easily into the air, with an astonished Neville and Susan's eyes glued to it.

"Now when Harry got his wand, his grandfather asked him to make the pencil float, he had intended that when it didn't move he would then explain the need for wand movements and structured spells. Harry didn't know this and just focused on the pencil floating, it did!"

Harry smiled at the memory, "It took me a while to figure out why Gran kept telling Granddad not to push me too hard but eventually we got the full story."

Luna continued her explanation, "The way we do magic is usually only taught by a master to his apprentice and is very difficult to learn, when Hermione and I arrived and started doing magic the exact same way, Grandfather came up with a theory."

Hermione interrupted to clear up a point, "Two actually, we now know Harry was helping us over our forming bond which is why we picked it up so quickly, our husband has an instinctual relationship with his magic and can get it to do pretty much what he wants. He's also brilliant at teaching us because he can lead our minds right through the entire process which helps immensely."

"Yeah just don't ask him to explain it to you, for that you need Hermione. Anyway Granddad's theory was that after many years of being taught to do magic a certain way, trying to forget everything you've ever learned is what makes it so difficult to use magic the way we do. After having regimented spells and wand movements drummed into you it's almost impossible to try to levitate something without thinking 'Wingardium Leviosa' in your mind."

Harry agreed, "Sirius, Remus and Maia have all failed to manage more than a levitation spell while Nym nearly drove herself nuts before deciding she was going to stick with the old fashioned way for her exams. Then, as if to prove a point, along comes Ginny and picks it up very quickly because she hasn't been taught the structured way to do magic yet."

Susan began to see where this was heading, "Are you offering to teach us this method of performing magic?"

Luna nodded, "In a word yes, you may struggle at first to pick it up and even slip back in some of your classes but once you get it, it will never leave you and then magic becomes like exercise, the more you keep at it the stronger you get."

Neville looked embarrassed, "Guys, if I slip any further back in my classes I'll be joining Ron in first year."

It was actually Jonathon who answered the boy, "Neville I recognise that wand in your hand from when Frank used to wield it, yes it is

undoubtedly a fine wand but maybe not be suited to you. It is dangerous to try using magic this way without a properly matched wand, the risk of magical exhaustion is greatly increased."

Harry understood what his grandfather was saying to him and couldn't help but smile at how their relationship had grown over the years, "Thanks Granddad, Hermione will you do the honours love? Guys come over here."

Hermione Potter placed her hand on the family crest built into the fireplace and said 'open' to reveal the hidden compartment filled with racks of wands. "Ok Neville I want you to run your hands along the racks and see if any wand has a reaction to you," he saw his friend's hesitation but cut his protests off at the pass, "let's not argue until we see if there's something here that works better than the wand you're using. Susan you try as well, it may be easier trying to learn a different way to do magic with a new wand."

Neville went first and an almost black wand reacted instantly as his hand brushed over it, Neville stepped back as if he'd been stung but the wand jumped into his hand and emitted a mass of sparks.

Jonathon was impressed, "Mr Longbottom never let it be said you're not a true Gryffindor, that wand is ebony with a Griffin feather as its core. That's a powerful wand Neville, yes a powerful wand."

Neville tried to answer Jonathan, "Sir, I can't take this, it's too much!"

The portrait just smiled back at him, "Neville the wand has chosen you, it won't work nearly as well for anyone else, just use it wisely son." Neville stared at the wand, the power just seemed to pour down his arm and into the wood, ready to be used, this was awesome.

Susan also found a wand that felt slightly more powerful but far more responsive, it seemed to hum in her hand, waiting on being commanded to do her bidding.

-oOoOo-

Neville lay in his room at Potter Manor, exhausted but too excited to sleep. Hermione proved to be a brilliant teacher who coaxed a feat out of Neville that he didn't think was possible, he didn't just float the pencil but embedded it into the ceiling. Having people who were helpful, patient and cheered your achievements was a totally new experience for the shy boy.

The idea that Neville was almost a squib was blasted out of the water as he spent the rest of the day trying to reign in his power, having cast so few spells successfully last year using the structured method left him with not a lot to unlearn.

He kept glancing over at his new wand on the bedside table, as if to make sure it was still there and he hadn't dreamed this, Neville Longbottom would not be slipping back in class but rather pushing his way through the pack to be nearer the front.

Susan Bones was also struggling to sleep, she agreed with Neville's assessment of Hermione as a teacher and had managed to get the pencil to wobble but not quite float. Her mind though was on other things, or should that be other people, or Cedric Diggory to be precise.

Their interaction this morning had indicated he was interested in her and now they would be going to a party together, it was the 'together' bit that was keeping her awake. Did Cedric view her as a potential friend, possible girlfriend material or just a housemate who had helped their Quidditch team? Susan had developed quite a bit over the summer and already she'd noticed a few boys taking an interest in her but she was only interested in the one, next week would be quite a party.

The thought of dancing with Cedric on a moonlit beach insured that when she finally succumbed to slumber her dreams would be pleasant ones.

Molly Weasley would have been proud of her sons, both were studying their books intently, the fact that they were 'Things Hogwarts doesn't want students to know' by the Marauders probably played a major part in their new study habits. Both books were the dragon skin bound editions that had been signed by the authors, this was the

twins payment for agreeing to sell the ordinary versions in Hogwarts, since all the money was going to St Mungo's there was no profit for them to share but both agreed what they received was better than gold.

Ginny had performed well today in both potions and working with Harry's grandfather on her magic. This had helped settle her nerves at the thought of moving classes on Monday, that and both Neville and Susan promising to help her any way they could as she played catch-up.

She was quietly confident she could handle the practical side of the courses and she'd returned to her room to discover new books for all the second year subjects she was now taking. Ginny had intended just to swap with Ron but Luna had talked her down from the tizzy she was working herself into, explaining that it was their fault she was now in second year and Cas had just bought the four sets while in the book shop. Luna also pointed out that she would need her first year books to study anything she required to know for second year.

Ginny doubted she would ever get used to the way that the Potter's did things but consoled herself with the thought that, no matter how bad the week was, she had Hermione's party to look forward to next weekend.

Sirius had just said goodnight to Maia and his mind was made up, he was going to ask her to marry him, hopefully with the wedding at Christmas. He would wait until after Hermione's party because he didn't want anything to overshadow that, then pop the question. He was quietly confident that he would be asking Moony to be his best man soon and couldn't wait until he didn't have to say goodnight at the door.

-oOoOo-

The group returned to Hogwarts on Sunday night, Ginny wanted to settle in to her new dorm while the twins were eager for 'Things Hogwarts doesn't want students to know' becoming a best seller. Susan had her own reason for returning early and that reason came

over as soon as she sat beside Hannah in the Hufflepuff common room.

“Susan, can I have a word please?”

With her heart tap-dancing inside her chest she followed Cedric over to a quiet corner of the room, “Susan I’m not sure what happened between us on Saturday or where that now leaves us both, I’m really looking forward to this party but know it will be better if you were going with me, as my date.”

Susan was trying to hold it together, this was what she wanted but shouting ‘YES!’ at the top of her voice might not be the best way to handle the situation, she needed to know if this was a one time deal or a little more serious.

“I don’t know Cedric, you’re a very popular boy and a lot of girls are going to be upset about me going on a date with you.”

The emphasis on ‘a date’ gave Cedric the information he needed, “Susan I’m hoping this isn’t just ‘a date’, I would like you to be my girlfriend with many more dates to come.”

Susan’s whole face lit up, “I know I would like that, very much.”

Cedric kissed his new girlfriend before talking her by the hand and leading her back over to Hannah, “I’ll see you tomorrow and we’ll go down to breakfast together.” Another kiss left Susan speechless though the Hogwarts gossip mill would make up for it as the news would flash around the castle quicker than Sir Chris Hoy on his bicycle.

Hannah pulled the happily stupefied girl down beside her, “Susan Bones, you are going to tell me everything that happened this weekend and tell me now!”

Ginny was undergoing pretty much the same kind of interrogation from her new dorm mates, the difference being Parvati and Lavender

wanted to know all her personal secrets and every detail about the Potters from the moment she walked in the dorm.

Considering they'd only just met, Ginny couldn't understand them both going into a sulk because she wouldn't tell them anything about Harry and his wives, she wasn't too bothered though as the second year Gryffindor girl's dorm appeared to be gossip central and they'd soon be back looking for information.

Their offer of helping her with any 'boy' troubles, since she had only brothers, was politely declined. Having two friends who were already married and another who was looking like dating a fourth year, why the hell would she ask these two anything?

It was basically just another attempt to pump Ginny for juicy gossip, she would rather write her problems down and stick them on the common room notice board than confide in these two, at least that way, although slower, people would get the proper facts.

-oOoOo-

When Hedwig flamed the Potters into the great hall the first person they saw was Ginny, "Hey, how has your week been?" Luna asked.

"It's been hard but good, Neville got his first ever points in potions, Susan caught her seeker and the twins had sold their entire stock of books by Monday. Apart from two dorm mates that are the nosiest gits I've met, the week's been very busy but mostly good."

"Susan and Cedric? She will be pleased," a smiling Hermione quipped.

"You got that right but not everyone is happy for them, some of the older girls have been sniping at her, asking just what she had to do to get Cedric to be her boyfriend. She's really looking forward to getting out of this goldfish bowl for the weekend, it's strange but we're all getting used to staying in the manor very quickly, it's like a second home."

That comment made Harry's morning.

Draco sat in Transfiguration with his temper growing by the minute, it was bad enough Crabbe and Goyle got kicked out of second year but to promote these four just rubbed salt into an open wound. Watching the mudblood trying to teach pureblood Susan Bones magic was disgusting to the blond Slytherin, Potter working with the squib was nearly as bad, at least the Lovegood slapper and the Weaselete were the right type, before they decided to be blood traitors.

When all six of them, even the squib managed to change their beetles into buttons Draco was spitting tacks. That these people had just appeared out of nowhere yet were now the talk of the school really riled him up, four of them were on their house Quidditch teams while Bones was dating the captain. The squib Longbottom was not only picking up points in potions but had just received more in transfiguration, completing the spell before Draco, the natural order of things was being turned on its head and that was unacceptable.

As they were leaving the class, Susan was talking excitedly with Hermione, delighted that she'd managed to complete the transformation using their method when the girls found their way blocked by an angry Draco Malfoy.

"The Bones name used to mean something in the magical world, now you're taking instructions from a mudblood, you are a disgrace to your forefathers and heritage."

Susan wasn't for taking that without replying, "You on the other hand appear determined to live down to the legacy your father left, I suppose we should expect no better from the son of a murdering death eater."

Draco was incensed and went for his wand, only to find himself pinned against the wall by an enraged Harry Potter, McGonagall arrived before things went any further.

"What is the meaning of this, I demand an explanation?"

“Mr Malfoy here thinks that it’s acceptable to call the Lady Hermione a mudblood, then draw a wand on her, my intention was to explain that this is not something I will ever allow or tolerate.”

“Neither will Hogwarts as long as I am headmistress, Mr Malfoy will be receiving quite a few detentions for his imprudence.”

“That is your right as Headmistress but I demand satisfaction for the insult to my family honour, he will face me in a duel.”

Malfoy tried to bluff his hand, “When ever you want Potter, it’s about time someone taught you a lesson.”

“Right here and now suits me just fine Malfoy, headmistress would you care to referee?”

It was plain for Minerva to see that nothing less was going to end this dispute, with the twins selling that blasted book all over the castle, students now knew their rights in any given situation. Malfoy had agreed to Harry’s demands therefore a duel was inevitable and within Hogwarts rules, she quickly decided to try and control the circumstances before anyone got seriously hurt. “Can I suggest we move to the entrance hall and give the staff time to put up some proper duelling wards, also Professor Flitwick would be more experienced as a referee than me.”

Harry nodded as Draco looked like an albino rabbit caught in the truck headlights, his doom was hurtling towards him and there was no escape for the Slytherin. Word had spread like wildfire and students were coming out the stone work rather than miss this, for Draco to apologise and withdraw now would destroy him for his entire time in Hogwarts.

Harry looked totally unperturbed, as did his wives and friends, Cedric was worried about his new chaser but Susan put his mind at rest, “Cedric I’ve seen Harry duel, there were five of us firing spells at him, all at the same time mind you and we couldn’t hit him no matter what

we tried, he then put the five of us out the match in as many seconds.”

Cedric relaxed and began to look forward to the duel, Malfoy was an asshole and anything that could bring the git down a peg or two was fine in his book, insulting Susan put the blond Slytherin straight to the top of his shit list.

By the time they were ready to begin most of the school was there with some even hanging over the staircases to get a better view, Flitwick spoke to both the boys, “The match will end when one of you is disarmed or unconscious, on the count of three you may begin, one...two...”

Draco knew he needed an edge and began firing curse after curse at Harry who casually moved his body out of their path which just enraged the blond Slytherin more, this continued for a couple of minutes before Hermione spoke up, “Harry love, we have to be at our other school in thirty minutes, can you end this soon?”

“Sorry dear but unlike Malfoy I’m a man of honour, Professor Flitwick said ‘begin on three, he hasn’t said three yet!’”

Flitwick was so amazed at the way Harry was moving he’d completely forgotten that fact, “Three!”

Five ball of paint left Harry’s wand and smacked into Draco’s eyes, without goggles that must have hurt like a bitch, the Slytherin squealed in pain as Harry moved like lightning towards his blinded opponent and leaped into the air, executing a flying back kick which had Malfoy going down like he’d been hit with a skeleton removal curse.

A shocked silence permeated the crowd, they had expected fancy spell work and a show of great power from the boy-who-lived, paint balls and taekwondo was as unexpected as it was devastatingly effective. Malfoy had jumped the count, fired everything he had at Harry but had been dismissed as no more than a gnat, few in the school figured they would have done much better, they might be able

to throw stronger spells but that didn't matter if you couldn't hit the elusive target.

The silence was broken by Flitwick's totally unnecessary announcement of "Lord Potter wins!" Given that Harry was standing there not even breathing heavy while Draco appeared to have been head-butted by a Hungarian Horntail as he lay in a heap, Crabbe and Goyle could have worked out who the winner was.

Hedwig flamed in as Harry offered his apologies, "Sorry for disrupting lunch time but some things just can't be permitted, Malfoy has had his arse kicked by two Potters now and we can only hope he's learned from the experience." With that they flashed away as Poppy worked on the unconscious Slytherin.

Cedric had to smile at the smug look on his girlfriend's face, "Told you so and he wasn't even on half power there, the three of them duel Nym, Sirius and Remus and regularly come out on top, apart from those three Nym is easily the best at defence in the school and auntie will be drooling when she discovers that Miss Tonks wants to be an auror."

Quite a number of students not only heard this but observed Neville and Ginny agreeing with that opinion, no one would be insulting the Potters again.

-oOoOo-

Tom Riddle was delighted with Draco's entries into his diary that night, even allowing for the boy's bias slant on his description of today's proceedings it must have been really humiliating to suffer being publicly defeated so easily. This could not have worked out better for Tom as he had began antagonising Draco for the last week, manipulating his fragile ego for an event such as this, the fact that Potter was involved made it all the more painful for the blond prick.

The Malfoy brat coveted fame, glory and power but wasn't prepared to do what it took to get it, now his foolish pride had been trodden all over he would soon be desperate enough for what Tom had planned. A few days of ridicule from the rest of the school would have Draco

ready to release the beast within himself, after that they would release the beast from within the chambers.

Tom's plan would shake the wizarding world to its core and see Hogwarts closed forever as a school, he would buy the castle at a bargain price in a few years time as nobody would ever want to set foot in it again.

Once Draco had seen the power available and the revenge possible he would welcome the merging, either that or the little shit would be so terrified he wouldn't dare say no to Tom Riddle. Draco would make the correct choice for whatever reason, without realising that this would be the end of him but the beginning of a whole new Draco Malfoy, one who would have kicked Potter's arse all over the castle.

-oOoOo-

Draco getting handed his arse in a sling did have a very strange side effect, Ron Weasley had watched the duel standing beside Crabbe and Goyle, the fact that Draco no longer wished to associate with the two now first year Slytherins, and had said so loudly in their common room, meant that they were delighted to see him defeated.

This forged some common ground between the three of them, apart from being the oldest students in first year all three, while in no way Potter supporters, loved the spectacle of Draco's humiliation. They were never going to be bosom buddies but at least they could sit together in classes and talk to one another, the Slytherins were never going to be a challenge to Ron at chess but at least they followed Quidditch. Since none of the three had friends in their own house or new year group they mutually decided to take the view that this fledgling friendship was better than the alternative, which was nothing!

Vince, Greg and Ron were all of the opinion that they could shine in the company of the other two whereas in reality there was very little to choose between them, the dumb duo had just become the thick trio.

-oOoOo-

Hermione's party with their non-magical friends had a lot less tension than Jillian's the week before, their relationship was beginning to lose its strangeness amongst their friends, who'd been used to seeing them together all the time anyway, and the trio found themselves able to relax more than they had anticipated. The party was in a local venue with catering and a disco so the night included lots of dancing though Harry stayed with his wives all evening.

It was near the end of the party and Hermione was slow dancing with Harry when he asked if she had enjoyed her party, "Oh it was lovely but I find myself looking forward to tomorrows even more, isn't that strange considering how long we've known both sets of friends?"

"I don't think so love, it's just with our other friends we can be the real us, no hiding what we can do or who we are."

She rested her forehead against his and spoke over their bond, "That makes a lot of sense my husband, do you think the day will ever come when we can be honest with our friends?"

He answered the same way, "Who knows what's in front of us, our lives are so complicated, anything could happen and I wouldn't be surprised anymore."

They felt Luna join them over their bond before she slipped into their arms and danced along with them, their relationship had been accepted to the point where nobody batted an eyelid at the sight of the trio dancing together.

-oOoOo-

Ginny sat on the beach as the sun went down and watched as Cedric and Susan danced slowly to the music, they were by no means alone as Fred had asked Nym to dance, the Tonks were also there and swaying to the music while Sirius was attempting ballroom dancing moves on the sand with Maia in his arms, but his dancing was more for comic effect than anything else as Maia couldn't stop laughing at him.

Harry was dancing with the birthday girl though they did have a passenger as Danni had her arms around both their necks, fighting a losing battle against sleep.

Ginny had a smiling Luna sitting beside her as they toasted marshmallows over a bluebell flame, the little red head felt she just had to ask, "How can it not bother you to watch the two of them like that, they look so perfect together that it would frighten the life out of me."

"The reason that they look perfect together is that they are perfect together," Luna tried to illustrate her point using her wedding ring, "This is a beautiful ring, if I move it from my left hand to my right it's still a beautiful ring and still mine. What you don't understand is that to us it would be like my left hand being jealous that my right got to wear the ring, when they are happy I am happy and it works that way for all three of us. That time we fought it actually physically hurt, I felt as if my whole insides were twisted out of kilter and only the three of us being together again mended the problem. Next month is my birthday and Hermione will be just as happy watching our husband dancing with me, you can bet Danni will still be there though."

"Cas is putting Danni to bed, she fell asleep in our arms and the little tyke is getting heavy!" nobody believed Harry was seriously complaining about his little sister as he kissed his blond wife while Hermione sat beside Luna.

Ginny had another question, "What do you girls do when it's Harry's birthday?"

Both girls grabbed Harry and they all ended up rolling about in the sand, giggling like mad while a blushing Ginny got the point and was so glad when Neville asked her to dance.

Susan was finding that the experience of dancing with Cedric on a moonlit beach was incredibly more romantic than her imagination had led her to believe; they'd had a wonderful day frolicking in the sea and playing games before holding a barbecue on the beach as the party started. These were all new experiences to the pureblood witch

and ones she had every intention of making sure she repeated in the future, both Neville and her had been to their fair share of parties but they seemed to be more about trying to be seen to do the right thing with the right people, this was just great fun for the sake of enjoying yourself, a totally new concept in their society.

Her Aunt Amelia had been unsure about this event when Susan announced she had a boyfriend now, quickly explaining that there would be adults present saved her weekend from being ruined, that and the beautiful swim suit Cas had got for her. It was nothing like the bikinis that Hermione, Luna and Nym favoured but showed enough that she was all girl without being too revealing, Cedric had certainly appreciated it and even the sight of Nym in her white bikini hadn't turned her boyfriend's gaze a millimetre from her direction.

She noticed Neville dancing with Ginny, Emma and Remus were laughing as the twins danced with each other when Nym took a seat and Harry now had both his wives with their arms around him when Susan's eyes were drawn to Sirius and Maia.

Sirius was having a great time and decided to go for it, "Maia do you think we would have a future together when the kids grow up?"

Maia was also having a great time and didn't really appreciate where this could lead, "Sirius I don't think you're ready for a pipe and slippers quite yet, we've a lot more dancing still in us for years to come."

Sirius dropped to his knee on the sand, "Maia, will you marry me?" Time appeared to stand still for the marauder as he awaited an answer, even the waves seemed to stop their motion as the world about them held its collective breath for the answer that would change his life.

Mia couldn't understand why she was shocked, Sirius had made his intentions clear from the very beginning. It looked like the trial period was over and he was keen to move on to the next step, her eyes automatically sought those of her daughter and couldn't fail to see the large grin being broadcast in their direction as everyone waited on

her next words. The question was very simple and all boiled down to the one thing, did she love Sirius Black?

Giving the kneeling wizard her full attention, she put him out of his misery, "I think I would very much like to be Mrs Sirius Black, my answer is yes!"

Sirius shakingly got up and kissed his new fiancée before they were hit by rushing bodies from every side, the congratulations and laughter left no room for doubt that their strange family approved of this move, all Sirius needed to do now was free his wand arm so he could summon the engagement ring currently residing in his bedroom, he only hoped Maia liked it!

-oOoOo-

George Goyle was practically unrecognisable to anyone who new him previously, being pretty certain that he was a wanted man in the magical world and not having the first clue how to interact in the muggle one saw him avoid contact with everyone. He had made his way across France, into Switzerland and was now set to enter Italy, all the time travelling unseen and living off the land, heading in the direction his dark mark was guiding him.

Line of sight apparition and foraging for food left him little energy, magical or otherwise for such things as personal grooming or clothes repairing, stunning rabbits and casting heating charms against the chilly nights was far more important.

George's appearance was now that of a 'gentleman of the road' or hobo, he decided what gold he had would be cherished and placed at the disposal of his master, hoping against hope that this might just save him from a painful reunion.

He didn't know how much further he had to travel or what reception awaited him should he find the dark lord, George only knew that there was no life waiting for him back in Britain and he wasn't smart enough to build a new life for himself anywhere else. Without his privileged pureblood status he would have to survive on his wits and abilities as a wizard, not much of a life awaiting him with those options. After all,

that was the reason George had become a death eater in the first place!

A/N Thanks for reading

Chapter 13

Minerva had waited a few weeks to see how matters would progress before feeling she absolutely had to say something, Hogwarts now had six second year students performing magic without the aid of structured spells. She asked the Potters if they could wait behind after class for a couple of minutes, their friends were reluctant to leave but she assured them that no one was in any trouble.

Once they were alone Minerva got right down to business, "I couldn't fail to notice that both Mr Longbottom and Miss Bones are now also using unstructured spells, I was wondering if there was a particular reason you haven't taught anyone else but your three friends?"

"There is a very good reason Headmistress, it would probably be easier explained if you allowed us to demonstrate the point, we promise to keep it quiet." Minerva had no idea what Lady Hermione meant but decided to go along with it for now, she nodded her agreement.

She was suddenly afraid for what she'd agreed to as Minerva found she couldn't move a muscle, her clothes were transformed to those of a ballerina as she gently floated a few feet off the ground. No one in the castle would ever believe the sight of Minerva McGonagall dressed like a figurine from a musical jewellery box, complete with pink tutu, slowly spinning around in the air, totally helpless.

Hermione spoke calmly as if this was an everyday occurrence, "The reason for this demonstration Headmistress is to let you see the power and abilities performing magic by this method can give to a witch or wizard, we know that all three of us are above average in terms of raw magical power but this gives us so much more control. Should you or the ministry check our wands no spell would actually show up, the point being should we wish to harm you, we don't need to know restricted spells or complicated wand movements, we just tell our magic what we want it to do and there would be no record of us casting any spell."

McGonagall was gently lowered and her attire returned to normal before the body bind was released, Luna finished the explanation,

“We only teach this to people we trust, can you imagine what would happen if someone like Malfoy could use his magic like this?”

Harry took over to finish making their point, “Grandfather has informed us that the reason structured spells are taught is to control the type of magic learned by students, no one needs to know curses that turn people inside out but we could probably do it without needing the restricted information.”

Minerva couldn't really disguise the shiver of dread that ran down her spine, “So the potential for performing dark magic is increased using this method?”

Hermione shook her head in disgust, she'd missed the whole point and just latched onto the one fact, “No Headmistress, the potential for dark magic comes from within, the difference here is that you don't have to search for dark curses to perform the magic. We won't teach this to just anyone and the only other candidate we're considering at the moment is Hannah Abbot. Hedwig would soon inform us if we were teaching the wrong person how to use their magic this way.”

Minerva took a lot of comfort from the fact that any potential candidates for learning this technique were going to be screened by a white phoenix. Dreams of teaching this method to all first years crashed and burned with the realisation that the first confrontation between Slytherin and Gryffindor could turn lethal, eleven-year-olds with the power to kill each other was not something she could contemplate teaching.

“Now I understand and totally support your stance as well as your choices of the people you're sharing this technique with, all three of your friends are from what would be considered 'light' families. The thought of someone like Mr Malfoy being able to do this would prevent me sleeping at night, I also realise you could have literally and legally have taken him apart and as Headmistress I thank you for showing restraint in your duel.”

“We didn't want to reveal too much but had he fired a curse at either Hermione or Luna then the time for restraint would be over, Malfoy

has had all the warnings he's going to get so if the idiot hasn't learned his lesson by now then that will be his problem."

Minerva could see the determination in Harry's eyes and couldn't really fault his reasoning, she changed the subject onto a happier one, "I understand that Christmas will see an extra special celebration for you three this year?"

This got both girl's minds firmly focused on something else, "Oh yes, we're going to be bridesmaids as mum and Sirius get married on Christmas Eve, though they haven't decided on where to hold the ceremony yet. Everyone is also looking forward to the Quidditch game and Sirius hopes you'll excuse him for supporting Hufflepuff against Gryffindor."

Minerva's stern demeanour actual cracked as a smile played on her lips, "As I'm no longer head of Gryffindor you can tell that scoundrel he's safe from me on that account, the match certainly has caught the imagination and we've been inundated with ticket requests. This game will undoubtedly have the biggest crowd in Hogwarts history and I'm told that you three are partially responsible, Wood's went a shade of green when he heard you and Miss Tonks were playing for Hufflepuff, I must say I'm really looking forward to the match myself."

The Potters were quite aware McGonagall had changed the subject but then everything had already been said about Malfoy that needed to be said, Hermione knew if he'd managed to get his wand out and mutter a curse Harry would have been unstoppable, just as she and Luna would be if someone attacked their husband. "Yes headmistress it should be a good game, as you know we're very friendly with the three Weasleys on the team and the Gryffindor chasers are all nice too, Oliver is ok but he just takes the game far too seriously. It will be a tough but fair game and our friends will still be our friends after it."

Minerva now sported a fully fledged smile, "With that attitude the sorting hat really couldn't have put you anywhere else but Hufflepuff, this may not be something you're comfortable with but three Potters in the house some considered a dumping ground has really raised the Badger's profile. That combined with the three students currently

having to repeat first year and them being members of Slytherin and Gryffindor are changing a lot of peoples minds about your house, I've really never seen Professor Sprout so proud of her puffs as she has been this term. You three have had a really positive effect on Hogwarts and for that you have my thanks."

The trio were blushing s they left the transfiguration class to say cheerio to their friends, Hedwig appeared to flash them away as Wyedean High wouldn't wait for them.

-oOoOo-

The Potters decided to take a massive risk for Luna's birthday, not only were they inviting their non magical friends to the manor but having their magical friends attend as well. Their Wyedean friends were starting to ask questions that they couldn't really answer so the Potters were going to invite them here for the very first time while allowing them to mix with their other friends. The only thing not on the menu that Cas was preparing was magic, with Luna's birthday so close to Halloween they took this opportunity to have a fancy dress party. With the Manor being decorated in this manner they were hoping that any magic accidentally revealed could be covered up by claiming it was a Halloween gag.

What Luna wanted most was to stop hiding things from their non magical friends, while Harry would give his wives anything, this was not possible so they had to settle for the next best thing, introducing them to the manor and their other friends.

Hermione had explained more of their situation to their close friends, "Harry's parents and Luna's dad didn't die in an accident, they were murdered while my dad was killed in a car crash that nearly claimed my mother as well. This is the reason we don't talk much about our home, we have security there you wouldn't believe. Please make sure you bring your invitations with you as they also act as a security pass and Remus will be picking you all up wherever you want."

Matt wasn't sure what he was hearing here, "Hermione you talk as if the murderers are still on the loose and looking for you?" when she just stared back at him without saying a word his eyes nearly popped

out his head as her silence answered the question, “Holy shit!” he whispered.

Donna defused the situation with her wit, “I know a few people who thought, since it was fancy dress, this party would be easy to cash, should I dissuade them from the attempt?”

Hermione had the image of the tin man, cowardly lion and scarecrow traipsing around the countryside, trying to find Potter Manor and had to laugh, “If you don’t get picked up by Remus, with a genuine invitation then you won’t gain entry, our security is the best there is.”

All in they had invited twelve people from Wyedean, leaving some upset but they couldn’t really keep their eye on many more.

Their magical friends who frequently stayed at the manor were now well versed in the muggle world and could easily pass their OWL, along with the half-dozen adult members of their family, Nym and Cas they should be able to cope with just about anything. The three Weasleys, Susan and Cedric, Neville and, since getting to know her from sharing classes, Hannah Abbot was now added to their list. Ginny’s two dorm mates were most upset at not receiving invitations but the Potters couldn’t understand that one as Luna didn’t even know their names. They were far more likely to invite the three Gryffindor chasers but having six of their Quidditch team here so close to the match would probably have melted Oliver’s brain as he worried about scenario’s that had the Hufflepuffs arranging for his team to lose.

All that was left to do was hope for the best but plan for the worse, and both Potter ladies setting time aside to have important conversations with the marauders and a set of red headed twins, explaining in very simple terms that any magical pranks would see them respond appropriately. Neither Remus, Sirius, Fred or George knew what ‘appropriately’ meant but had no intention of finding out, they would be on their best behaviour.

-oOoOo-

Matt was really pleased with his Batman costume, Jamie as the Flash in honor of Harry's lightning bolt scar but both boys eyes nearly popped out their head when they spied the girls. They had decided between them on a superhero theme and Claire looked stunning as Batgirl, Donna to be different was Poison Ivy but Jillian's Wonder Woman costume had Matt wondering how he would survive the night without drooling all over her. He'd always had a thing for Jillian but wouldn't say a word while she was chasing after Harry, perhaps tonight was the time to speak to her, hiding behind a mask might just be enough to give him the courage he needed.

They were all getting picked up at Matt's and had clothes and coats covering their costumes until they got there, for Jillian's sake he hoped Harry's place had the heating on.

As Remus drove the minibus through the gates and along the drive, the friends got their first view of Potter Manor, and what a view. The building had beautiful lighting illuminating its exterior, while the lights from inside shone through long regency windows creating a spectacular sight in the middle of the countryside.

Donna let out a long low whistle, "Ok, never seen that coming, this looks like some Lord's country manor."

Remus couldn't hide his grin, "This is the ancestral home of the Potter's and Harry will become Lord Potter when he reaches his maturity." He wasn't lying; Remus just wasn't telling them that Harry reached his maturity at eleven.

All of them walked up the stairs and into the entrance hall with their jaws hanging open, trying to understand how their friends who lived here could appear so normal and attend Wyedean High.

The birthday girl was waiting for them with her two companions, all dressed as Athos, Porthos and Aramis, Donna couldn't help but roll her eyes in amusement when she first saw them, "Oh that's about as subtle as this house, the Three Musketeers, 'all for one and one for all' we get the message!"

Her humour quickly broke the embarrassed silence that had been building when they realised just how wealthy their friends were, "Some place you got here Potter," drawled Matt.

Harry indicated his costume, "Yes I know it's not a patch on Wayne Manor but its home to us!"

Claire was looking all around her, "Shit Harry, if I'd known you were this rich I would have come as D'Artagnan!"

That started Luna laughing and as she had the most infectious laugh any of them had ever heard they were soon all chuckling away as Harry led them towards the room set aside to be non magical and introduced them to their friends from the other school.

The movie night influence was clear to see on the magical brethren, Fred and George were Han Solo and Luke Skywalker though Ginny had point blank refused to be Princess Leia and resisted all attempts to transform her into R2-D2, she got her revenge by pointing out to Hermione that George's Lightsabre actually had a purple beam that came out of the handle and the whole thing was powered by magic. It was promptly confiscated with the promise that she would order one as part of Harry's Christmas, Ginny had decided on the character of Dorothy because she felt as if the Potters had entered her life like a twister and whisked her off to a different world.

Cedric and Susan had went for the more traditional Arthur and Guinevere, figuring they could deal with any questions better while Neville surprised them all with his Sonic costume, Angelina, Alicia and Katie had helped him with it as he didn't know you could actually hire things like that, Hannah was dressed as Athena, again a safe bet if she were asked any questions by the Potter's muggle friends, she had considered having an owl sitting on her shoulder but thought that might be taking things a shade too far.

The entire room was decorated for Halloween and the stereo was blasting out tunes for people to dance to, with low lighting and some hired disco lights the effect was completed by the hired dry ice machine providing a covering of smoke along the floor.

“Wow you guys, this is fantastic!” Jillian enthused.

“It had to be to match that costume of yours, Wonder Woman, it’s a wonder your mother let you out dressed like that!” Hermione answered, noticing Jillian blush.

“My mother thinks I’m dressed as Minnie Mouse, she still treats me as if I’m nine but luckily she’s at her sisters.”

Matt appeared at her arm, “Well I think we can safely say you defiantly aren’t nine anymore, would you like to accompany me while we go in search of some food?”

Harry tried not to laugh as Wonder Woman left on the arm of Batman towards the dining room where Cas had set up a buffet, the table was covered in all types of food with the only lighting being the multiple pumpkin lanterns around the room. Matt noticed the imitation bats gliding around the room on wires as the absurdity of what he was doing made him laugh and totally relaxed him, the worse that could happen was she said no.

Jillian noticed Matt laughing and asked him what was so funny, his reply stunned her, “Well Batman was trying to work up enough courage to ask Wonder Woman if she would go on a date with him when the flying bat brought home the absurdity of the situation, sorry but I’ve been fretting about this for ages and I think the pressure just got to me, either that or I would like to plead temporary insanity.”

Jillian tried to keep a straight face as she looked into Batman’s eyes, “So you think it’s insane to ask me out?”

“Oh no, I’ve wanted to do that for such a long time, waiting until we’re both in these costumes is the bit that’s nuts, Would Miss Jillian White like to go on a date with Mr Matt Dawson this Saturday?”

He waited with bated breath on an answer as it all appeared to be going pear shaped, “Oh Matt, I’m sorry but I’ve arranged to do something with my mum this weekend that I can’t get out off, any other time and the answer is most definitely yes!”

Batman kissing Wonder Woman might not make the headlines but it was big news in their circle of friends as everyone was happy for them.

Hermione watched as Clair and Donna chatted to the twins, the red heads were staying in character but with their own inimitable style, otherwise they could have come across as a couple of geeks, she also noticed Nym rather appropriately dressed as a policewoman keeping a close eye on the situation, it was beginning to look as if the might actually pull this off.

The food and dancing went down a treat as a good time was had by all, the only unexplained incident was when Danni, also appropriately dressed as a little devil, decided she wanted one of the flying bats and summoned it to her hand. Harry quickly had another one fly around Emma and land on her shoulder, leaving the impression that these things were designed to do that. Auntie Em had thought it was ironic that she came as the Wicked Witch of the West, considering that she was the only non witch living in the manor. Sirius and Maia were Mr and Mrs Frankenstein though no amount of coaxing could get Remus to dress as the wolfman, Cas in a maid's outfit had the magical users sniggering at the joke while the Tonks as Bonnie and Clyde were in direct contrast to their daughter.

Seeing Neville in his Sonic costume trying to dance with one of their muggle friends classified the entire evening as a resounding success, both sets of friends mixed really well though Susan danced with no one but Cedric but that was certain to be the case no matter the company.

Watching Luna's smile as everyone said what a great night they had was worth all the planning and living on their nerves all night, it felt as if there was hope both their worlds could co-exist, in the muggle side at least.

It was three very happy Potters who eventually fell asleep in each others arms that night.

-oOoOo-

Draco was having an argument with himself, and he was losing.

“If I do this hundreds of people could die!”

“What do we care, most of them have insulted us in one way or another. Remember Potter and his wives will be there.”

“I don’t have a problem with seeing their dead bodies lying on the ground, what if some of my friends die?”

“What friends? We don’t have any friends, the only person in this castle that talks to us is Pansy, if she dies it clears the way for a betrothal with someone more suitable. We need someone who can help us reach our goal, someone with influence, money and preferably big tits!”

“That sounds great but why do I have to kill so many people?”

“We are beginning a new world here, this is the starting point, after this the magical world will never be the same again. We’re going to bring it to its knees before commencing to help it stand tall again, the name Malfoy will be at the forefront of the brave new world and synonymous with success. We will be the figure that eventually leads our world in the direction we want it to go.”

“Again why do I have to kill so many...” and the argument went on.

-oOoOo-

Ron found himself in the same dilemma as Greg and Vince, there was no way they could shout for his house and if Gryffindor won his little sister would be hailed as the hero, not something he could look forward to. Their other option was not attractive to them either as the three Potters were on the Hufflepuff team, it was a strange experience to be sitting there not knowing who to root for.

The stadium was packed with even the temporary stands that had been erected especially for this game full to capacity as the much anticipated match time rapidly approached.

In the Hufflepuff dressing room Cedric was getting himself all tongue tied as he tried to deliver his pre match motivational team talk when Harry spoke, "Cedric you have done everything you possibly could for this team, lets just go out there and enjoy ourselves, win or lose Susan will still be waiting to deliver a kiss at the end of the match."

Cedric took a deep breath and smiled, "Thanks Harry, I needed a reality check there before I turned into Oliver Woods. Time for some honesty here, we originally expected to get slaughtered today, lets go out and do as suggested, play the game because we love it and the result will look after itself. Harry, with that attitude never doubt you're a Hufflepuff!"

The team flew out to tremendous applause as Lee Jordan began his commentary, the three Potters flew past the stand containing their family and couldn't miss little Danni, jumping up and down on Emma's knee and dressed from head to toe in Hufflepuff colours.

The game was played at a blistering pace that had the crowd in raptures the second Madam Hooch tossed in the Quaffle, after fifteen minutes Hufflepuff were fifty-forty up as the score was see-sawing back and forth when Luna suddenly stopped, Harry and Hermione were at her side in seconds and Nym wasn't far behind.

Woods was screaming at his chasers to keep scoring but the girls could see something was clearly wrong and headed over to offer assistance, the four beaters and both seekers were speeding there as well.

Luna couldn't believe what she was seeing but her gift had never been wrong before, only the extreme danger to her family had kicked it into action so soon, "Guys, someone is leading the biggest bloody Basilisk in the whole world right into this stadium, we have at best thirty seconds before it gets here."

Hedwig appeared but Harry pleaded with her, "Listen girl I know you want to help but the best thing you could do would be to get Emma and Danni out of here, I can't even think straight knowing they're in danger, please girl!"

The white phoenix gave a mournful cry before flashing away, she knew how much her chicks loved their sister and they would need to have their wits about them to come through this.

Harry squared his shoulders, "Ok we need suggestions fast as our families in the stands are sitting ducks."

"Smoke!"

"Hermione we're too young and those things will kill you!" Harry suddenly had an image in his head of Luna's party and the smoke covering the floor, "Remind me to kiss you later love! We need to make sure people can't see this thing or they're dead."

Thick smoke started belching out the Potter's wands, the Weasleys, Nym and Cedric caught on instantly and imitated their friends with the rest, seeing the serious faces all around them, started to do the same.

When Hedwig grabbed Emma and Danni, the family knew it was deadly serious and all drew their wands, seeing what the Quidditch teams were doing they were soon emulating the fliers and pouring smoke into the arena, Hannah, Neville and Susan were doing the same and encouraging everyone near them to do likewise.

Draco didn't want to be seen so he led the basilisk towards the stadium and let it go over the last rise by itself, the creature slithered right into a bank of dense smoke but could still navigate by the amount of noise and smells emanating from her target.

"This will only buy us a moment, we're going to have to take out those eyes."

"Luna that will take too much out of you, it's way too dangerous."

“Hermione our family is in that stand, nothing is too dangerous as far as that’s concerned but it has to be now.”

Harry made the decision, “Let’s go, guys keep up the smoke until you see us hit the beast.”

The three flew in a tight formation with Luna in the middle, trying to ‘see’ the Basilisk’s actions, projecting them to her bond mates while flying and getting ready to fight a battle was immensely draining for the little blond witch. They flew in like fighter pilots on a strafing run with Luna as the airborne radar lining up their target and sending it to the fighters. Going at full speed with precision flying and pinpoint accuracy they each fired four rapid blasting curses which destroyed the beast’s deadly eyes.

Unfortunately this also wiped out the last of Luna’s reserves as she passed out, Harry and Hermione grabbed an arm each but all they could do was land as gently as circumstances allowed, having fed as much energy as they possibly could into Luna left them severely drained also.

The smoke output stopped as the Basilisk’s tortured cries rang around the stadium, the beast was thrashing about in agony after having its eyes blasted apart, the spectators and the fliers got their first look at what the Potters had attacked and the panic started.

People were screaming as it seemed to be heading straight for the Potters but Nym had other ideas and flashed passed them, firing curses at the creature’s head to force it in another direction, the twins, Ginny and Cedric were right on her bristles, pouring curses at the giant snake. Cas and Hedwig appeared beside the trio at the same time as Harry held the unconscious Luna in his lap, “Hedwig get us home, Cas we need Maia and her potions.”

They had no sooner left the field when Amelia Bones amplified voice boomed out over the stadium, “Fliers, get out of there now, everyone who can perform a basting curse, on the count of three fire at its head, one, two, three!”

Basilisk skin is extraordinarily resistant to magic but no living creature will survive upwards of five hundred blasting curses striking simultaneously, its head was turned to mush as the giant body underwent the creature's death throes.

The celebratory cheering was almost as explosive as the combined blasting curses though few in the crowd yet realised just how close death had come to calling.

Molly Weasley was sobbing in relief, she had been immensely proud watching her three children play but when they attacked that beast to drive it away from their friends, her heart had been in her mouth. When Madam Bones had ordered blasting curses, Molly had put everything she had into it and suspected all the parents had done the same, the beast never stood a chance against that multitude and ferocity of spells.

Cas had grabbed Maia and vanished, leaving Sirius, Remus, Andi and Ted racing for the exit to get outside the wards and apparate to the manor, after helping blast the head of that thing of course!

Rumours of what the creature actually was were sweeping the stadium, that is those who didn't directly hear Hagrid's incredibly loud voice proclaiming, "That's a Basilisk, that is. Can kill you just by looking at you, that's why the Potters went for the eyes. Could've killed hundreds that thing could!"

Ginny headed straight for Amelia, "Madam Bones, Luna said someone was leading that thing towards the stadium, it didn't just turn up here by accident."

Amelia could see immediately that was the only explanation that made any sense, why else would the gigantic mythical beast turn up out of nowhere at the biggest event on the Hogwarts calendar? They were once more indebted to, and desperately needing to speak with the Potters. She thanked Ginny before heading straight for the Headmistress.

"Minerva we don't know where that thing came from or, Merlin forbid, if there are any more of them about. I think we need to shut the

school for a few days while we have it searched from top to bottom. Meanwhile my department needs to investigate who was controlling the beast, someone intended for there to be a large body count here today and I want them found.”

She then cast sonorus before addressing the stadium again, “Everyone please stay in your seats until the aurors can establish that the threat is over, we will let you know what is happening shortly, please be patient and we’ll give you more information as soon as we get it.”

Shacklebolt had heard what the Weasley girl said and borrowed a broom to fly in the direction that the Basilisk appeared from, he was figuring something that size had to leave a trail which would indicate where it came from. He also noticed Lord Black’s party heading outside the wards and being joined by the Tonks girl on her broom, considering they had four children playing in that match, all of whom had attacked the beast, Shack reckoned if anyone was above suspicion it was them.

A sixty-foot Basilisk did indeed leave a track in the grass, all the way to the castle, there may indeed have been someone leading the creature but since this was the route all the students had taken to the match it would be impossible to pick out one set of footprints.

He headed back to give both his bosses the bad news, until the castle was extensively searched it would have to be considered too dangerous to let any children return there.

-oOoOo-

Hedwig flamed them back to the manor where a hysterical toddler pounced on them, Luna was still out and lying in Harry’s lap while Hermione rested her head on his shoulder. Danni shouted ‘Lulu’ before cuddling into her unconscious big sister, her sobs racking her little body.

Harry was running his hand through the toddler’s hair, trying to offer some comfort while mentally preparing himself to deal with a silently hurting Emma. “We’re exhausted but ok, I’m really sorry for treating

you that way Emma but the thought of Danni in danger was terrifying us to the point where we couldn't function, we had to get her safely away."

Emma was now on her knees beside them, taking Harry's head in her hands she gently kissed him, "Harry thank you for looking after all my girls, you kept the three of them safe and I couldn't ask for any more than that from my son."

Cas appeared with a very worried Maia, "Luna drained herself to allow us the chance to fight that thing, we could sure use some potions to help get our energy levels back up."

Hermione was almost sleeping on Harry's shoulder and he wasn't much better so Maia took charge, "I think you need a few hours rest before we think about administering any potions, the last thing you want just now is artificial energy buzzing about your system. Cas, can you put them to bed please?"

Danni refused to let go of Luna and had been crying so hard she needed a sleep herself so the four of them were soon asleep in the giant bed while Emma, Maia and Cas hovered over them.

The rest of the family came racing up the staircase to find the three Potters sleeping with little Danni holding Luna but lying across Harry and Hermione, they weren't getting away from her again.

Dobby popped in with refreshments as they all settled down to wait, "Luna said that thing was a Basilisk and someone was leading it, where the hell did it come from?" Nym asked.

"What the bloody hell is a Basilisk and what happened after I left?" Emma asked, she'd gone from having an enjoyable afternoon to being snatched right out of her seat by Hedwig. Even Danni realised this meant something was very wrong which is why the child was in such a state.

Remus answered her, "A Basilisk is the king of snakes whose venom has no antidote, this one was about sixty foot long but that's not the worst of it, one look into its eyes instantly kills you."

Emma had tears rolling down her cheeks as she realised why they had to get Danni away, but then they'd stayed to fight that monster?

Maia continued the tale, "They created smoke to hide its eyes before Luna used her abilities and the three of them flew in there like avenging angels and blasted the creature's eyes apart. Luna then collapsed and the other two barely managed to get her safely on the ground, it was heading straight for them until Nym led an attack by broom and, with the rest of their friends, held it back long enough for Hedwig to get them out of there. After that Cas grabbed me but I assume the beast was dealt with."

"Oh it was dealt with," Sirius confirmed, "Bones took charge and ordered the fliers away while the crowd opened fire on its head, trust me it was well and truly dealt with!"

His mirror went off in his pocket and he activated it to see George with all their friends trying to peer over his shoulders, "Sirius, how are they? We're worried sick here!"

Sirius couldn't help but think that these three had really great friends on both sides of the divide, "They're exhausted but will be fine, all three are sleeping and will be for the foreseeable future, what's happening there?"

"It's looking like the beast came from the castle so there is a very good chance we'll all be sent home via Hogsmead. Susan says her aunt is desperate to talk with them but I will pass on the message that they are unavailable at the moment. Tell them Cedric and their two beaters had to be pulled off Woods after he tried to claim Gryffindor won because they stopped playing, good job Nym had left by that point or he would really have been in trouble, that boy takes his Quidditch far too seriously."

Nym had went to her room to change out of her Quidditch gear and just caught the end of the conversation, "I'll bet the prat never left his hoops during the whole battle, probably thinks it was some ploy by us to win the game!"

George's laughter told them all she'd guessed correctly, "If Cedric was like that we would never have played for him."

"McGonagall is livid so I think he's in trouble when we come back, if we get to come back."

That was a sobering thought for Nym, she needed her NEWT's to become an auror, totally unaware that she'd impressed the hell out of the head of DMLE with her actions today, a quick word with her niece to discover the girls chosen career path and an application form would be winging its way to the would be auror.

-oOoOo-

Fate was not a happy bunny, that irresponsible Chance could have seen hundreds killed before their time and who knows what that would have done to the world, not so much the butterfly effect but more like an elephant dropped from great height effect, the ripples would have been enormous.

She was going to terminate that little blond shit with extreme prejudice, his new master always was a conceited bastard so she would use that to bring him down, the disgraced name of Malfoy would be removed forever by the death of its only heir.

That just left her to deal with Chance, she couldn't kill him, much as she'd like to but as long as people believed 'there's always a Chance' then she couldn't get rid of him. She would have to think of a suitable punishment where the dice were so heavily loaded that Chance didn't come into it.

A/N Thanks for reading and wishing everyone all the best for 2010

Chapter 14

Draco heard the screams coming from the stadium and although part of him was thrilled their attack was proceeding as planned, another deeper part realised a line had been crossed that could never be taken back, Draco Malfoy was now a murderer!

Their plan called for him to hide at the edge of the forest and insert himself amongst the survivors as they fled the stadium in panic, the massive cheer was unnerving as all the things that could have gone wrong started playing games with his mind. Even at this distance he could hear the commanding voice calling for calm, this was really bad news as he needed chaos to remain unnoticed, he was then almost noticed by his new head of house on a broom, if they were looking for him already he was in deep shit.

The voice in his head triggered to quell Draco's panic, Tom had come too far to fall at the last hurdle, "We have to be prepared for any eventuality, now is not the time for panic."

"I don't think I can do this anymore!"

Tom's voice was like velvet, "Then perhaps its time to complete the ritual and I will be able to protect us."

"This wasn't what we agreed."

"I know, but should you finish up in Azkaban or kissed by a dementor the opportunity would be gone. Do you think they will waste time on a trial for the individual who sent a Basilisk to a Quidditch match?"

"I don't know what to do!"

"Yes but I do which is why I think we should complete the joining now, while we still have the chance. I guarantee that tonight we will be sleeping comfortably in Malfoy Manor."

That was the clincher for Draco, the choice between a ministry cell and his room at the manor was not really a decision that required any thought on his part. Tom had coached him on what the ritual required so he sat crossed-legged on the grass, cutting the palm of his right hand before firmly clutching his wand in it.

“I Draco Malfoy, of my own free will, invite Tom Marvolo Riddle into my body.”

There were no flashes of light, no magical shockwaves and no sound, just Draco Malfoy sitting up a bit straighter.

“Oh that feels good, it would appear I was correct and people still believed whatever they wanted to hear.” Draco Malfoy had given up his life so Tom could live, it was time to start putting that sacrifice to good use.

-oOoOo-

Amelia, Augusta, Minerva and Pomona were standing in the middle of the Quidditch pitch while making arrangements for what was about to happen, Augusta figured the massive crowd would be appreciative and easier to manage if they could actually see what was happening.

Amelia had every available auror in Britain on site now and distributed them to patrol the route from the stadium to Hogsmead, they had commandeered the Three Broomsticks where the Hogwarts elves were depositing student trunks and setting up refreshments. It would soon be time to evacuate the stadium a stand at a time, seeing them safely down to the inn where they could floo, apparate or portkey home, depending on their preference. Pomona was going to take charge in Hogsmead while Minerva made sure all their students arrived in the village safely.

Augusta congratulated her friend, “Minerva you must be very proud of your students, they reacted quickly, worked together and saved a lot of lives today. The ministry will be looking to award some form of recognition for their brave actions.”

“Thank you Augusta, I was immensely proud the way most of them reacted,” that her glare was directed at Oliver Wood was unmistakable since all the other fliers were standing in a group chatting while he was a lone figure. “Almost all of them are friends with the Potters and instantly sprang to their aid when they recognised the danger.”

Trying to figure out who actually fired on the Basilisk and attempting to divide any revenue the carcass provided would be an administrative nightmare, since it was laying on Hogwarts grounds Augusta proposed a solution.

“I think we should contact the goblins and let them render the carcass with all profits going to Hogwarts, almost everyone who fired on the beast is either a student or has a child attending here, this way they all benefit.”

Minerva and Pomona were hardly likely to disagree with that, especially when Amelia also approved.

“I agree where any gold should go and also with awards for the students, in fact I'd like the fliers to assist keeping an aerial watch on the evacuation, I will have a couple of aurors on brooms as well but could use some extra sets of eyes up there. If they spot anything suspicious all I want them to do is reported it to the nearest auror and let us deal with it.”

Susan, Neville and Hannah had made their way down on to the pitch to be with their friends and discover if there was any news on the Potters, all three were well aware that the twins never went anywhere without their precious mirror that could contact the marauders.

Susan and Cedric approached the group of women, “Excuse me aunty but I have heard from Sirius, the Potters are all asleep, suffering from exhaustion but are otherwise expected to be fine.”

Amelia fixed her niece with her gaze, “Do you know how they got a warning about that thing attacking?”

Susan didn't flinch, "Yes aunty," she didn't volunteer any more information.

"Am I to assume that you are not going to tell me?"

"Yes aunty."

Amelia could see she wasn't going to get anywhere with her niece, she was too similar in nature to herself for that to work, she switched the intimidating stare to the boyfriend.

Cedric didn't hesitate, "If you want that information it will have to come directly from a Potter, you won't find any of their friends saying anything about them."

Amelia couldn't quite hide the smile that threatened to break out on her face, she'd met Cedric briefly before the match and had taken to him immediately, watching as he attacked the Basilisk and now standing up to the head of the DMLE had only increased her opinion of the boy. Susan's upbringing had made her mature for her years and it was easy to see she really liked this boy, Amelia was aware the hardest thing for a parent or guardian to do was let their charges make their own mistakes but she was a lot less worried now that she'd met the lad, Amos and Tabitha had raised a fine son.

-oOoOo-

Tom/Draco couldn't believe how orderly the crowd was making its way down to Hogsmead, with accompanying aurors and fliers patrolling the route, Draco would have been in serious trouble. Tom wasn't too worried if the Basilisk didn't kill hundreds as its main objective had been achieved, terrifying Draco enough to have him undergo the bonding.

Tom studied the evacuation looking for its weak point and found it, the organisers thought, quite rightly, that the danger would be over when they reached Hogsmead. The security here was much more lax and this was where he would make his move, choosing an alley between two buildings as his target, Tom silently apparated to his

destination before casually strolling out while adjusting his robes, an innocent portrayal of a boy who'd just used the alley for some much needed bladder relief.

Joining the crowd Tom strolled into the Three Broomsticks, had his name ticked off by Pomfrey and even stayed for a cup of tea, trying to overhear what had actually happened before using the floo to access Malfoy Manor, too easy!

Tom thought it was ironic that the Potters had once more defeated Draco, it would take his power levels time to return but these three were definitely overdue being dealt with.

-oOoOo-

Ron stood with his parents and Percy while they waited on the Quidditch teams escorting the last of the crowd to Hogsmead so they could go home, his mind was awash with the images from earlier. The three Potters attacking through the smoke was way more exciting and braver than any of the books his sister used to fantasise over but it was the three Weasley trying to divert the beast away from their friends that struck home. Ginny flew in there with her hair streaming behind like a pennant and curses spewing from her wand into the massive beast, with a brother on either side of her doing the same, Ron had never been prouder of being a Weasley.

With the whole school looking on, the family name had never been more prominent and Ron was perfectly happy to bask in the reflected glory, it didn't get any better than rewards without any effort on his part as far as Ron Weasley was concerned. Under torture Ron might be forced to admit he couldn't have done what Ginny did, she really was a superb flier and he didn't recognise most of the curses she fired, far less have the ability to cast them himself. His mum and dad looked ready to burst with pride as parent after parent came over and congratulated them on their children's actions today, that it was the twins who were being praised instead of berated added to the occasion.

The 'Molly Weasley Patented Hug' was of the extra strong variety when her three children did show up, they were saved from suffocation only by the arrival of Madam Bones.

"Arthur would you mind if I had a word with the twins?"

"What have they done?" Molly asked, after all old habits were hard to break.

"Oh they're in no trouble whatsoever, I understand they have a means of communicating with Lord Black and I was wondering if I could borrow it for a moment?"

The twins held a conversation with a glance before George said, "Sure!" and handed her the mirror.

Amelia stared at it for a moment before asking, "How do I make it work?"

Fred's "You don't!" earned him a cipl round the ear from his mother before George explained, "That mirror is tied only to us and won't work for anyone else, the marauders are geniuses who value their privacy with good reason."

Fred continued, "Harry, Hermione and Luna are all asleep and will be for a while yet, Sirius will let us know if there are any developments and we'll contact Susan right away, we know she'll be as worried about them as we are."

Ginny agreed, "While we're worried we know they'll be well looked after and will contact us when they can, acting as lookouts gave us something to focus on but all there is left to do now is wait."

Amelia handed back the mirror, "Let me take a wild guess here, you know how they got an early warning but aren't going to tell me?"

Fred was very sincere in his answer, "Madam Bones, if you ever decide to run for minister, and we're old enough to vote, then you can count on ours because you are one smart lady!"

Molly was shocked at her children addressing the head of the DMLE in this manner, before she could start on her tirade Amelia burst out laughing, "Don't be too hard on them Molly, that's the nicest refusal I've had today. Susan just refused point blank to tell me anything while Augusta was amazed when Neville, very politely mind you, told her no. The loyalty inspired by the Potters is something to behold, in a couple of months their influence and impact on our world has been tremendous, I'm so glad Susan is friends with them and, when she gets over the shock, I'm sure Augusta will feel the same way about Neville."

Susan came forward holding Cedric's hand, "They certainly had an impact on us."

Ginny again had to agree, "If it wasn't for them I would have been sitting in the stands today as a spectator, instead of being the youngest seeker for over a century."

Neville and his Gran joined the discussion, "If it wasn't for them there's a good chance none of us would be standing here, I'd say that was quite an impact!"

"And don't think I didn't notice your actions today young man, or the new wand you were using to carry them out, we will be having a long discussion when we get home."

Normally those words would have reduced Neville to a quivering wreck but this Neville knew if he'd been closer, he would have been standing beside Harry and Hermione as they protected Luna, there was also a touch of pride in his Gran's words, leading him to believe this would be a discussion rather than a bollocking.

-oOoOo-

Tom was sitting down to dinner with Narcissa and thinking to himself just how well he'd done making the decision to inhabit this body instead of returning as himself, this house was a palace, the dinner superb and the company was stunningly beautiful and as sexy as hell. He could also feel a connection to this exquisite lady, something

about her left arm was calling him to take control. His original intention was to keep her totally in the dark but Tom could now see what an asset she would be to have by his side, and anywhere else he fancied. He told himself this decision was based purely on what she could do for him and that hormones played no part in the process.

Using his own voice Tom began her seduction to his cause, "Narcissa my dear, I feel we are old friends, tell me how we met?"

That voice caused Narcissa Malfoy to drop her cutlery and stare at her son, now noticing the slight differences in his mannerisms and body language.

"Your son Draco was nice enough to invite me in for a visit, surely I don't need to tell you who I am?"

Narcissa was shaking like a sapling in a strong wind, "Master?"

Oh this was so much better than Tom could have ever hoped for, all this and the beautiful mistress of the house called him master! "That's correct my dear, did you doubt I would return?"

The slight edge to his voice had her slavishly out her seat and kneeling at his feet in seconds, like Pavlov's dogs the death eaters were conditioned to obey their master's every whim, witnessing him administering pain and death to others were great motivators to those spared his wrath.

"Never my lord but may I be allowed to ask what will become of my son?"

Here was Tom's route towards her unquestioning loyalty and unquestioning devotion, telling lies came naturally to him. "That my dear depends on you, I have two choices open to me at the moment. I can take your son's life force and regain my own body or I can coexist in here and help him grow into the outstanding young man we both know he's capable of becoming, it all depends on just how far you're willing to go to help your son?"

Narcissa looked up into those eyes she thought she knew so well and saw lust there, the lust for total domination of everything and everyone, "My lord, I would do anything to aid my son."

The smile on his face appeared a mixture of Lucius and the dark lord, Narcissa didn't think that was a winning combination.

"Good, then I think it's safe to say we will be choosing the second option." Tom recognised he had control of this woman, now was the time to let her know there was no going back, "Today your son set a Basilisk lose at a Quidditch match, with my assistance he was able to escape undiscovered. You will come to my room later where I will require your assistance in plotting our rise to the very summit of wizarding society, first on the agenda will be a suitable witch to become my betrothed. Pansy repulses me and would be a hindrance at my side, I need someone who will bring wealth, power and beauty to our cause, have a list of suitable candidates with you and don't limit it to only dark families, once the contract is signed the girl will do whatever she's told."

A few hours later Narcissa was standing outside Draco's bedroom door, adjusting her nightdress while thinking, 'This is for my son, I must be strong!' She knocked on the door and was invited to enter.

-oOoOo-

In the master bedroom at Potter Manor, Harry was awake and both his girls were stirring, Cas left to fetch the others while Sirius sat with them. "Hey kiddo, how are you feeling?"

"Like I've been hit by Hagrid, my head hurts."

"It can't be as bad as mine," groaned Hermione

"I don't like to boast guys but I think I've got both of you beat this time!" Luna found herself gently moved into a position where Harry softly kissed her as Hermione, mindful of their painful heads and still sleeping sister, berated her in whispers.

“Luna Potter you nearly frightened the life out of us, you pushed yourself far too near the edge and saved everyone in the stadium, you were brilliant love!”

This woke Danni who didn't appreciate her sister moving without her and once more wrapped her arms around 'Lulu', “Hey Danni, I'm fine now darling and didn't mean to give you a scare.”

She just held on to her big sister 'Lulu' tighter while Hermione ran her fingers through the toddlers hair, “It's ok baby, we're sorry for sending Hedwig to get you and will read you a story every night for the next week.”

Danni appeared to think about it, “Rabbits?”

“Yes darling, Peter Rabbit.”

Cas returned with two very worried mothers and the three Tonks, Maia began administering a potion that instantly rid them of their headaches before she laid into them. “Now that's dealt with would you mind explaining to me just what the hell you three were thinking about today, you were almost killed!” Maia was a fair degree angrier than Emma but then she'd seen the whole thing, having it described to you was never going to do the incident justice.

Hermione elected herself spokeswoman for the group, “We were thinking that if we didn't do something then a lot of people were going to die, our family was in that stadium and if that isn't worth fighting for then I don't know what is!”

Harry tried to calm the situation, “Besides we knew Nym had our backs and our beautiful Hedwig would never let anything happen to us...”

The shriek that came from the phoenix made everyone in the room wince, “Eh, she's still angry with us because we refused her help and asked that she got Danni out of there instead.”

Luna had the toddler wrapped in her arms, “We couldn’t think straight with her in danger, I’m sorry Hedwig but that was the best means for you to help us today, you’re bonded to us and can surely see that?”

Hedwig hopped over onto the headboard and her wonderful voice soothed everyone’s frayed nerves, they’d come through the ordeal unscathed and it was time to concentrate on that fact.

Remus entered with a special edition of the Prophet, “You need to see this!”

Under a banner headline simply entitled “Heroes!” was a picture that had Harry cradling an unconscious Luna as Hermione stood protectively over them with her wand drawn. When the now blinded Basilisk emerged from the smoke, Nym streaked over their shoulder to engage the beast, quickly followed by the Weasleys and the rest of the fliers. They were like bees buzzing around the monster, keeping it occupied while Cas and Hedwig coordinated the Potters’ rescue. Inside had pictures showing a calm evacuation of the stadium while heaping praise onto everyone involved not only with killing the beast but organising a text book evacuation. The article correctly identifying the creature as a Basilisk and went into great detail explaining what the creature was capable of, going on to speculate what the outcome could have been without the Potters quick thinking and decisive action.

Rita then gave a small editorial on today’s events, “There are no doubts in this reporter’s mind that the Potters averted a catastrophe today and saved many lives, just as the front page picture proves their friends and fellow Quidditch players then helped save theirs. The aftermath saw the Ministry and Hogwarts staff working together in perfect Harmony to evacuate every student and almost four hundred adults quickly, efficiently and safely, not words we have been able to associate with either of those establishments for a number of years. The only minor blot on the copybook was failing to apprehend whoever arranged for the Basilisk to make an appearance at the match, no one seriously believes it just turned up there all by its self.”

Emma had to sit down, any anger at Hedwig taking her and Danni home evaporated with her first glance at that picture, she understood why they had to get their sister out of there, she also understood why Maia was so upset, she'd watched the whole thing. She was wondering what would come of this but the trio's continual attendance at Hogwarts would be once more back on the agenda if Emma had anything to do with it.

Sirius then asked the question that everyone in the British magical world wanted to know the answer to, "Luna did you see who was leading the Basilisk toward the pitch?"

The girl sighed, "Yes, Draco Malfoy!"

"I think Amelia Bones would really appreciate hearing that news as quickly as possible!" Once more Sirius had proven himself the master of the understatement.

-oOoOo-

Amelia and a team of ten aurors arrived at Malfoy Manor, they were shown into a reception room by a house elf to await the mistress of the house, they didn't have long to wait.

Narcissa entered wearing a house robe, "Madam Bones what can I do for you?"

"We are here to speak to your son Narcissa, it's most urgent that we speak with him."

"I'm sorry but that's impossible!"

Amelia fixed the blond with her best stare, she'd had a long day and wasn't prepared to offer social niceties. "I don't think you understand Narcissa, that wasn't exactly a request but an order. Your son has been implicated with the appearance of a Basilisk at Hogwarts today which overrides any concerns about his beauty sleep."

“My son had nothing to do with that and it’s still impossible to speak with him.”

“Give me one good reason why I can’t speak to your son or I’ll be forced to arrest you for obstructing justice.”

“My son can’t speak to you because he’s dead!”

Of all the things Amelia expected to hear, that was not one of them, “Would you care to explain that comment Mrs Malfoy? I could have sworn you said that Draco was dead?”

“My son was possessed by the dark lord, he forced Draco to release that Basilisk and concocted some story about sharing my son’s body, the dark lord doesn’t share. The body is laying on my son’s bed with my dagger sticking out his chest, the dark lord claimed my husband and now my son but I had my revenge!”

All present could see how hard the proud woman was fighting to retain her composure, “I was going to call your department in the morning and report in, I want my son’s name cleared and am prepared to undergo questioning under Veritaserum and submit my memory for pensieve viewing. I don’t understand how he achieved the feat but I know it was the dark lord that returned and murdered my son, as a Black and a Malfoy that demanded revenge.”

Four aurors headed off in the direction of the indicated bedroom and returned in minutes to confirm that the body of Draco Malfoy was indeed lying on the bed with a dagger imbedded in his chest.

Amelia started giving orders, “Get an investigative team out here immediately, Mrs Malfoy I’m afraid you need to come with us, I’m placing you under arrest for the murder of your son, Draco Malfoy.” One way or another, this case was going to be sensationalised, whether it was Voldemort or Draco she killed would be the difference between a medal and Azkaban.

Yet again Tom Riddle had underestimated a mother's love of her child and it cost him dearly, his grand scheme for world domination was once more snuffed out when he least expected it.

-oOoOo-

Chance watched the event unfold and couldn't believe he'd failed so miserably, where had he gone wrong? The voice of Fate coming from behind his right shoulder left him wondering if the decks hadn't been stacked against him from the start.

"I'll tell you where you went wrong, you took an arrogant seventeen year old, gave him a twelve year old body, then placed him against an educated and sophisticated woman who loved her son dearly." Fate's chuckle sent distinctly unpleasant shivers down his spine. "She may have cried for an hour after the event but she didn't hesitate, your meddling never had a chance as the experienced woman was always going to triumph over the naïve child, kind of reminds me of our situation here don't you think?"

Chance thought the cruel hand of fate was going to choke the life out of him and for what, so he could have a little fun at someone else's expense? If he got out of this Chance swore he would never take a chance like that again, only sure things would be receiving Chance's attention from now on.

-oOoOo-

The six exited the floo into the ministry atrium and immediately felt all eyes on them, Emma insisted that they rest on the day after their adventure with the Basilisk and then it was back to Wyedean on Monday morning. It was now six PM on Monday evening, they had expected the ministry to be mostly empty when arriving for their appointment with Madam Bones. Word that the Potters were coming to the ministry was never going to remain a secret and a large proportion of the employees were 'working late' that evening, two aurors were waiting to escort the group directly to their bosses' office.

This took some time due to the number of people who wanted to thank them personally as almost everyone in the British magical world had family and friends in that stadium on Saturday.

This was an unnerving experience for Emma, she'd been fighting against her maternal instincts which screamed at her to withdraw the children from Hogwarts because it was too dangerous, hearing that little Alix, Jane or Brian probably wouldn't still be here if not for their children's swift actions was humbling.

They arrived late and bewildered to their appointment with a smiling Amelia Bones, "I can guess what happened and would like to add my thanks as well, like you Susan is the only family I have left and without your intervention our world would have been in mourning today. There is a certain euphoria sweeping through the witches and wizards of Britain as realization dawns on what could have been, I believe the muggle phrase is 'we dodged a bullet!' Is that right, I heard one of the secretaries using it?"

Sirius chuckled, when the head of the DMLE started using muggle phrases then perhaps there was hope for his world, "Yes Amelia, you got that exactly right, the magical equivalent would probably replace bullet with Avada Kedavra."

They all sat and got down to business, "I am very interested in not only how you anticipated there was going to be an attack but were able to fire through the smoke with such accuracy?"

Had Amelia known them better she would have immediately recognised that Luna sitting in the middle of her bondmates was a distinctly unusual formation for the trio but Harry and Hermione both wanted to be able to hold her hands and offer support.

"Madam Bones, what I am about to tell you amounts to a family secret and I would appreciate it not leaving this office. My wife, the Lady Luna, has an ability that allows her to see a few seconds into the future, this gift becomes particularly prevalent when our family is in danger and that's what got Maia out of the inferno their house became."

Luna was worried, this was the first time they'd told someone about her gift who wasn't family or a friend, what she was frightened of was being considered a freak and being shunned or exploited. With her family around her she knew that would never happen, but sometimes the lonely little girl clawed her way to the surface as her insecurities were brought to the fore.

She felt her mother's hand on her shoulder, "My daughter's gift is not that of a seer, she doesn't receive visions rather an alarm when her family is in danger. It isn't infallible as she saw her father murdered but didn't get enough warning to do anything about it, she also knew the Grangers were in danger but couldn't prevent it."

Emma's hand rested on her other shoulder, "She saved me and my unborn child, for that I will be eternally grateful."

Hermione attempted to explain the process, "After working on her gift for years Luna can now use it for a very limited period in our duelling practice, knowing what your opponents are going to do is a tremendous advantage, especially since she can inform us over our bond but it is terribly draining to use for any length of time."

Harry held his wife's hand up to his lips and kissed it, "This lovely lady was using her gift to predict where the Basilisk was, feeding that information to Hermione and me while flying her broom and then firing the most powerful curses we could at the beast's eyes. Even with Hermione and I supplying her magical energy over our bond, she seriously depleted her magical core before collapsing from exhaustion."

Amelia reckoned this must be her week for surprises, she was astute enough to notice the family rallying around the girl but that something was still bothering the little blond witch, "Lady Luna you have been very quiet, what's your take on all this?"

Luna spoke without thinking, "I don't want to be treated like a freak or studied to find out how it works, we just want to be left in peace to live our lives!"

It was expressed with such feeling that she found herself enveloped by her two bondmates, Amelia's heart was breaking at the fear displayed in Luna's eyes, comparing this to the girl who'd so bravely fought a Basilisk meant she was going to need to do some serious reassuring here.

"Lady Luna, you have my word that neither myself nor my niece thinks of you as such nor will I be informing anyone of your gift. I agree with your mother's opinion that you are not a seer and with that there is no need for anything to be registered. Susan has an extremely high opinion of you all and I have no hesitation in saying that I do too!"

The sense of relief in the young girl was pleasing to see, she decided to move the meeting onto the next topic, "The minister wanted to have you here in front of the press to make this next announcement but I was sure you would hate that, casually mentioning that it might leak out he was laying on a beach in southern France while the Basilisk was being fought changed his mind, he'd told Minerva that he was too busy with matters of state to attend the game. The three of you are being put forward for Order of Merlin's and it's only the grade that's still to be decided on. This is the most prestigious award that our world has to offer and they are not handed out lightly."

Amelia expected excitement at that announcement, she was disappointed and not a little bemused by the animosity displayed.

Harry spoke for all of them, "Madam Bones, could I ask you who the last two recipients of this 'most prestigious' award were?"

Amelia was brought back down to Earth with a crash, how could they have been so stupid? She sheepishly answered the question, "Albus Dumbledore and Peter Pettigrew."

Harry nodded, "That's what our information told us as well, how you could possibly think we would allow ourselves to be in any way associated with those two?"

Hermione voiced her agreement, "When you use the word prestigious and then apply it to that pair, it kind of loses its respectability don't you think?"

Amelia wanted to be clear what she was hearing, "Are you indicating you would refuse such an award because of who has received them in the past?"

Luna nodded, "That's exactly what we're saying, also by informing you now, it saves everyone the embarrassment of us having to publicly turn them down."

Emma got to throw in the hand grenade, "We've also yet to decided if we will be remaining in Britain, I'm finding the whole Hogwarts experience way too dangerous for our children. Please understand that I am very happy with the friends they have made in their short time there and hope they continue those friendships if we leave, but a parent's first responsibility must be to their children's safety."

Amelia was now worried, this could be very bad.

Sirius asked the question she knew would be coming but her prepared answer shrivelled into dust at their leaving the country.

"Amelia, what happened regarding Draco Malfoy? Luna's gift has never been wrong."

"The information I'm about to give you cannot leave this room, what you are about to hear is the truth no matter what you read in the press. Firstly I offer my apologies, that idiot Fudge has already informed the press about you three being awarded the Order of Merlin. He wanted you at the press conference and wasn't too pleased when Augusta and I blocked that, part of me wishes I'd let him just to see his face when you told him no."

Taking a deep breath Amelia continued, "Secondly Draco Malfoy is dead, he was killed by his mother who claimed the boy had been possessed by Voldemort. Her testimony under truth serum, pensive memories and physical evidence all support this theory."

“Physical evidence?” Maia asked.

“A diary with the name Tom M Riddle was found in the boy’s room, this object had a magical residue that reeked of darkness, I honestly believe the woman, she was devoted to that boy. The problem is Fudge, he refuses to even consider that the dark lord could return and we may have to remove him or Narcissa Malfoy might find herself in Azkaban after ridding us of Voldemort.”

Sirius almost growled, “You are aware that Narcissa is my cousin?”

“Yes but we should be able to work around him and avoid that outcome, what really worries me is the possibility he can come back again. Dumbledore claimed that a Hogwarts professor was possessed by Voldemort last year, no doubt expecting a certain Harry Potter to be there.”

Emma couldn’t believe what she was hearing, “Amelia if you’re trying to make sure our kids never set foot in that place again, then you’re doing a fine job.”

She gave a wry smile, “I think it’s more important that I tell you the truth, if the Malfoy boy was possessed on Saturday, I would view this as another attempt by Voldemort to kill Harry.”

The silence was total so Amelia continued, “This leaves me with two very important questions, is he gone for good and why the fixation with Harry?”

“Madam Bones if we can trust you to keep this secret then I will answer both of those.”

Everyone in the room was now staring at Harry, Amelia was frowning, “Harry I might have trouble with that, depending on what you tell me my department may need to take certain actions to combat threats.”

Harry considered this and nodded his agreement, “I trust you with this so will give you the answers, that prophecy we destroyed foretold

either Voldemort or I must kill the other, therefore he will be back and looking for me.”

Amelia couldn't disguise the look of horror at the burden placed upon this young man, “I understand why you would not want that information made public, our whole world would sit back on its arse and wait for you to finish the job for them. I assume there was more to the prophecy than that?”

Harry nodded, “Basically that's the gist of it though, only I can kill him permanently so he'll want me dead before I get too powerful. Given that fact I hope you'll understand why we need to remove ourselves from Hogwarts, he was prepared to kill hundreds just to have a chance at me, I can't allow that to continue. We have to withdraw and do so publicly to ensure the information reaches him, this might have a knock-on effect to Hogwarts but better that than children's bodies strewn about the grounds.”

Luna was now comforting Harry, “We can contact Rita and give her another interview, try to soften the blow but I don't see any way of avoiding it.”

Hermione had an idea, “Unless Sirius was to visit his cousin and get the story directly from her? That would get the facts made public, free Mrs Malfoy and poke Fudge in the eye.”

Amelia was impressed, “Hermione are you positive you shouldn't have been a Slytherin? This will drive Fudge nuts and might just see him pushed out the door.”

“Amelia we still expect to see Susan and the rest of the gang on Friday night with lessons taking place this weekend as usual.” Maia didn't want the kids to lose their magical friends, she was also fond of them herself.

“Thanks Maia, that may just take the edge off the devastation she will feel at you three leaving Hogwarts.”

“We may be leaving Hogwarts but that doesn’t mean leaving our friends, that just won’t happen!” Luna was so emphatic in her declaration no one doubted her sincerity.

Emma was already composing in her head the letter they would need to send to Hogwarts, McGonagall would get a shock but Rita would help explain their reasoning. Why should they let Voldemort know their movements in advance? Knowing the full prophecy Emma was certain he would return and be after her family again, she only hoped their training would be enough.

-oOoOo-

George Goyle was slowly working his way through a forest in Albania when he sensed a familiar presence nearby, he’d finally found his master and now all he had to do was survive the experience!

A/N thanks for reading

Chapter 15

Sirius entered the interview room and for a moment thought he saw something swiftly pass behind the cool exterior that his cousin was projecting, he may be no expert on emotions but thought it might be hope.

"Hello Cissi, how are you holding up?"

She glanced at the head of the Black family, "The dark lord took my husband, my sister and now my son, I carry his mark Sirius and whatever they do to me cannot be worse than having to plunge a dagger into Draco's heart."

Sirius sat in the chair across from her, "It's our intention to get you out of here, even if we have to topple the minister to do it. You're family Cissi and Andi was ready to go head-to-head with a couple of aurors so she could get in here to see you. We managed to convince her that wasn't such a good idea but it was a close call."

He detected the first crack in her demeanour as her eyes showed signs of filling up with unshed tears, "I know what it is to think your life is over but believe me when I say there can be light at the end of the tunnel. We will ensure our world knows the truth of Draco's death and the Quidditch match, Fudge doesn't want this but the magical public need to have this information in case Voldemort attempts another return."

"Another return?"

"Everyone knows what happened with baby Harry and Dumbledore apparently had Voldemort in the school last year growing out the back of Quirrell's head. We can't verify this since Dumbledore is still unconscious and it's beginning to appear as if he won't be awakening ever again. What chance did twelve-year-old Draco have when Voldemort's spirit could possess a Hogwarts Defence against the Dark Arts Professor?"

Narcissa was having trouble believing that she'd killed her son yet not ended the problem, "You mean after all that it was for nothing?" Her tears were flowing now.

"No Cissi you did a wondrous thing, he somehow placed a part of himself in a diary and used that to take over Draco. You may have destroyed the thing that prevented him dying in the first place. Hopefully we can now finish the job and banish him to rot in hell forever."

"How are you going to do that?"

"You let us worry about that, first thing we need to do is get you out of here."

-oOoOo-

Hedwig dropped them just outside the Burrow's wards; it really was bad manners to appear inside them unless you had an invitation. They were walking up the path toward the eccentric building when they heard a voice from above them.

"Oi, what are you lot doing here? You can't just ..."

Ron never got to finish what he was shouting as Ginny nearly knocked him off his broom when her Nimbus blasted past him as if he were standing still, three seconds later she had Luna bundled to the ground in a desperate hug. "Luna Potter, you scared the bloody life out of me. NEVER do that again!"

The twins weren't far behind their sister and had Hermione and Harry in a group hug before the two youngest got off the ground. "Ginny's right guys, you really scared us. We've been going nuts here all day, I thought we would have heard from you sooner."

Harry could see they had been worried, "Sorry, we thought Sirius had updated you on the mirrors, remember we had to attend Wyedean High today before going to the ministry."

"What's Wyedean High?" They had totally forgotten about Ron.

"Nothing you need to concern yourself with Ron, now get lost!" Ginny was right in her brother's face but he was too stupid to see the danger.

"Hey, I live here. If anyone is going to take a hike it should be them!"

"You guys want to ask your parents if you can come over to the manor? What we have to say really isn't for those we don't trust." Harry had hardly got the words out his mouth when Ginny was on her broom and heading for the house at speed.

"Hey Potter, we're in the middle of a game here. You can't just come waltzing into our home and drag these three away, Weasley Quidditch matches are way more important than your petty problems." Ron was supremely confident until he noticed both the twins staring at him as if he was a wanker.

Ginny came zooming back, "Mum says ok as long as we're not too late back."

Luna was still picking bits of grass out her hair from where Ginny had floored her a few minutes ago, "That wont be a problem as we've got school tomorrow anyway. Cas!"

The elf appeared in her human form and had Ron's eyes nearly popping out his head, "Could you take Ginny, Fred and George to the manor please? We'll be along in a moment with Hedwig."

Cas took the three Weasleys away, leaving Ron standing there alone with his broom in his hand. "Well Ronnie, looks like you'll be playing with yourself again."

"Hermione, don't you mean playing by himself?"

"No Luna, I think I got it right the first time."

Harry was just glad Hedwig flamed them away while he could still control his laughter, it was a close run thing though.

-oOoOo-

Harry looked at their three friends waiting expectantly on them for some answers, he immediately decided this was going to be hard enough without having to do it more than once. "Cas, could you please ask our other Hogwarts friends if they could possibly join us here?"

Hermione and Luna agreed with their husband's idea and were writing notes to McGonagall and Sprout, inviting them to travel to the manor via Hedwig.

The group made their way into the library while they waited on the rest of their friends, Danni had heard them enter and came dragging Emma by the hand. Since the Quidditch match the toddler had become all clingy again and it was in Luna's direction Emma was being dragged.

With Danni entrenched on her knee, Luna was unable to rise when Susan, Hannah and Cedric entered. They had all been spending the day at Hannah's while Amelia was incredibly busy at the ministry. Cas returned with Neville a matter of minutes later, they were all just getting comfortable, prior to hearing why they were all here, when they were joined by McGonagall and Sprout.

Emma could understand them wanting to get this over with, she hadn't been looking forward to informing Minerva that none of them would be returning to Hogwarts.

Harry took a deep breath before starting, "Ok, this isn't easy to say and it certainly won't be easy to listen to but that's what we need you to do. There are people out there who don't wish anyone to know the truth, we have an appointment with Rita Skeeter tomorrow with the intention of blowing the lid off the whole thing. We thought you deserved to hear the truth from us rather than reading it in the Prophet."

Hermione seamlessly took over the narrative, "The basilisk was an attempt by Voldemort to kill Harry, he possessed Draco Malfoy to control the beast."

Cedric was the only one able to find his voice, "What happened to Malfoy?"

Luna had Danni snuggling into her as she answered, "Narcissa Malfoy killed this version of Voldemort."

McGonagall wasn't headmistress of Hogwarts because she was dumb, "The questions that immediately spring to mind are this version? Why Lord Potter, did Mr Malfoy survive and what happens now? I'm sure I'll think of some more later but those will do for now."

Hermione answered the first one, "Voldemort is not dead, he didn't die that Halloween evening and has been trying to come back to finish what he started ever since."

Luna took comfort from the toddler in her arms as she took over from Hermione, "We know why he was after our husband but I'm sorry, that's not something we want anyone to know at the moment. The boy who was Draco Malfoy died the instant he became possessed, killing his former body was the only way to defeat Voldemort."

This was the bit Harry was dreading, "As to what happens now, we have to very publicly withdraw from Hogwarts. We were incredibly lucky that there wasn't a massive body count in that stadium, I couldn't live with that on my conscience. My presence at Hogwarts paints a target on every student in the castle, we can remove that by removing ourselves."

Ginny, Susan and Hannah were now in tears with Hermione and Luna close behind them, Harry knew what the problem was. "Listen guys, we may be leaving Hogwarts but there is no way we're leaving you! Lessons will continue here every weekend and I hope you'll be there. I realise this may place you in danger so I'll understand if you don't want to come..." Harry suddenly found himself smothered by three crying females who he wasn't married to, Cedric's droll voice broke the sombre mood.

"Hey Potter, two wives not enough for you? Leave some girls for us lesser mortals."

This turned the tears into giggles, lifting the entire mood in the library.

Ginny though was deadly serious, "You listen to me Harry Potter, that old goat Dumbledore cost me three years with my best friend. You-know-who will need to bring more than a ruddy big snake as back-up to make me lose contact with her again."

Neville nodded in agreement, "The only reason Hannah, Susan and I weren't attacking the Basilisk was because we didn't have brooms. If you-know-who returns he may well be coming after Harry, but the Longbottom's and Weasley's will be pretty near the top of his list to! We will never follow him so that automatically makes us his enemies, I reckon we have a better chance if we stick together. There was a whole regiment of musketeers, it doesn't have to be just three!"

Pomona couldn't see the logic behind their decision, "I'm sorry but I fail to see how you three leaving Hogwarts makes the castle safer? We can't really be sure if Lord Potter wasn't there on Saturday whether the Basilisk wouldn't have been released anyway. What we can be sure of is that without you three it would have been a disaster of a magnitude never seen in Britain before. I have now seen the Potters in action on a number of occasions and I for one feel safer knowing you are in the castle."

Harry was actually blushing at the lavish praise, "Thank you professor though there is another side to the coin. Voldemort wants me dead, by attending Hogwarts we are advertising our location at specific times of the week, not a good idea. We are powerful and growing more so as we get older, therefore it's in his interest to tackle us sooner rather than later. We on the other hand know every day we can postpone the confrontation helps inch the final outcome toward our direction."

Hermione had her arms around Harry now, "This is why we train as hard as we do, one day he'll come for Harry and you know Luna and I will be right by his side."

Luna confirmed this, "We thought there would be more time but it would appear not, Potter Manor is safe though you have to

understand the danger you place yourself in associating with us. Not something we're comfortable with so it had to be said."

Susan just smiled at Luna, "The same could be said about me, my guardian is the head of the DMLE."

"Since my guardian is the head of the Wizengamot then you could place me in the same category," Neville was also smiling and here to stay.

"Hey Fred, do you think we're dangerous to be around since dad is the head of the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Department?"

"Naw George, we're dangerous all on our own. Though I would have to point out that Ginny in a temper scares the life out of me all on her own!"

Again Cedric's droll voice came into play, "Wow Hannah, did you know we hung out in such dangerous company? It's a wonder we can sleep at night."

"Well Cedric, I seem to remember a certain Hufflepuff seeker attacking a Basilisk so that lets you out. Between bad Bones, dangerous Diggory, nasty Nev, the perilous Potters and wicked Weasleys I think I need to find myself some new friends." Her large smile made a mockery of her words.

Hermione was trying not to laugh at the thought of Neville being called nasty, "Well if audacious Abbot here is quite finished, perhaps we could return to more serious matters. Advertising our location to Voldemort is not a good idea, neither is being a known friend. If you are still willing there is an open invitation to the manor every weekend. Come for lessons or just to hang out, either way we'll be delighted to see you."

Ginny spoke for all of them, "You will be seeing us, count on it!"

The talk got less serious after that as the friends brought the Potters up to date on things that they had missed, Luna had to warn their friends about tomorrow's papers. "The minister has announced all

over the press tomorrow that we will be receiving Order of Merlin's, we weren't consulted and have since refused them."

Minerva was bemused by this, "Why would you refuse them? I was there and can't think of anyone who deserved an Order of Merlin more."

"The reputation of that award has been tarnished beyond repair in our eyes, we wanted nothing to do with it."

Harry was getting confused looks for this statement so Hermione explained their attitude. "If we consider the last two recipients of this award, one attempted to murder Luna's mother while the other was instrumental in the death of Harry's parents and Sirius being incarcerated in Azkaban. Why would we want reminders of that lying about the house?"

Minerva was left in a quandary, she decided just to air her problem here and now. "Can I ask is this aversion to awards specific to the Order of Merlin, or does it go deeper than that?"

Hermione answered for the trio, "I think you would have to be a bit more specific before we could answer that headmistress, what do you have in mind?"

She decided to come clean, "It was my intention to award the Quidditch players who participated in the attack on the Basilisk awards for outstanding service to the school. I don't think I've ever been prouder of my students than I was on Saturday."

Harry was grinning now, "Headmistress, we would be proud to stand beside our friends and fellow Quidditch players."

Emma jumped in before things got out of hand, "Excuse me headmistress, I have a few conditions on that. I don't want this publicly announced until after its taken place. The ceremony should be in Hogwarts and a surprise to everyone, I don't want it becoming known that these three will be in the castle at a specific date and time."

Pomona was nodding her head in agreement, "We could hold it one night after dinner, we would say nothing until you arrived."

Minerva wasn't happy with that, "I wanted all the parents in attendance, if I was proud as your headmistress I can only guess at how they must have felt. They really should be there to see them rewarded."

Luna's whole face lit up as an idea came to her, "We could do it here this weekend! The players saved our lives by turning that monster away from us, we could invite them, and their parents here to say thank-you. The headmistress could enter and announce the awards while I'm sure Rita would love to cover it for the Prophet. This may even help the bad publicity Hogwarts is sure to get from us leaving."

Harry leaned over and kissed Luna, who now had a sleeping Danni in her arms. "That is a great idea love and I think we should do that whether the headmistress wants to present the awards or not." He then turned to their friends and professors, "You are of course all invited."

Pomona again seemed to be missing the point, "Wouldn't that be contradictive to the security that you need?"

Hermione fielded this one, "No, all of the players have already visited here. Could I please ask you a question Professor Sprout, just where is here?"

Pomona realised she had no idea, even though it was her third visit. With a phoenix aiding transportation they could be anywhere, the time on the clocks and flora would indicate somewhere in the British Isles but that was as close as she could guess.

Minerva was aware that it would be Monday at the earliest before Hogwarts would be re-opening, the idea of a positive piece hitting the press the day before was very appealing. "Mr Potter I would like to accept your very generous offer, these awards will not be house-based, rather a personal token of our appreciation for all you did for Hogwarts at the weekend."

"Can we tell our mum?" George asked

"She'll never believe you two did something to earn anything other than a detention!"

Ginny's comment had everyone laughing at the truth in it, perhaps a party was just what they needed. Her next one though killed the mood amongst the youngsters, "Eh guys, is it parents or families that are invited?"

Harry's "Aw shit!" let her know he had immediately understood the problem.

-oOoOo-

Molly Weasley was presented with an invitation to Potter Manor for her and Arthur this Saturday, she heard Ginny's explanation but the mother in her recognised when one of her children wasn't telling the entire story.

"They want to say thank-you to the people who helped them in the Quidditch stadium and have invited all the players and their parents."

Molly used a technique she'd honed and perfected over many years, Molly said nothing and just continued to stare at her daughter. Ginny was showing signs of cracking as the deliberate silence lengthened.

"Headmistress McGonagall and some of the professors from Hogwarts are going to be there as well."

Still Molly maintained the silence, drawing the information out her daughter like a poultice. Ginny eventually blurted out, "We're all getting special wards from the school, they're going to be presented on Saturday in front of all our parents."

Molly considered this information before breaking her silence, "If the awards are from Hogwarts then they should be presented in front of the full school where everyone can see it." Her gaze switched pointedly to Ron before turning back and noticing the unshed tears in her daughter's eyes.

"Not everyone will be able to see it, Luna, Hermione and Harry are all leaving Hogwarts."

Ron proved beyond any shadow of a doubt that he was king of the crass remark. "Ha! I knew they were in Hufflepuff for a reason, the yellow cowards are running scared. Probably to that Wyedean High place."

Ron's feet left the ground as he was lifted by the front of his robes by Fred, purely by virtue of him being the closest to the prat. "Those cowards saved seven Weasleys and any one of the trio could destroy you without breaking sweat, Merlin little Danni is probably smarter than you as well."

George was also raging at his younger brother, "You have to engage that brain of yours before making these remarks. That mouth keeps making snide comments that you don't have the ability to back, it's no wonder none of the Potters can stand to be anywhere near you. Those two Slytherins that you hang about with are the only people in Hogwarts who can stomach your lazy, pigheaded, opinionated presence. I would bet that's only because they sit at a different table while you're eating! "

Molly was just as angry with her youngest son's remark though it was the twins reaction to it that concerned her more. "Fred, put your brother down! How dare you start a fight amongst family over outsiders, if this is the influence the Potters have on you then perhaps it's for the best that they're leaving Hogwarts."

Ginny was ready to attack her brother as well but her mother's last comment stayed her hand. She needed her mother to see who was in the wrong here, "The reason we went to Potter Manor tonight was Ronald here not only insulted the Potters once again, he was listening in to everything that was said. They might be leaving Hogwarts but we are still invited for our private lessons, lessons that have seen me advance at Hogwarts while others have been made to repeat a year."

Ron was determined not to be made the bad guy here, "This is my home, why the hell should I be the only one who doesn't know what's going on?"

Fred was barely controlling his temper at the prat, "Because it's none of your business!"

Molly was concerned at the ferocity of her children's reactions, "There's more to this than you're telling me, why exactly are the Potters leaving Hogwarts?"

Silence.

"This is not Madam Bones that you are dealing with, I am your mother and you will tell me now!"

This was met with another bout of silence, if word got out Fudge would attempt to block the Prophet.

"Very well, you leave me no other option. You will no longer be allowed to visit the Potters, I don't like what it's doing to this family."

Ginny had tears in her eyes until she saw the giant smirk Ron was wearing, her temper exploded and she smacked her brother as hard as she could. "If I am going to be punished then at least now it will be for something. What kind of a brother is happy at their sister's misfortune? I hate you Ronald Weasley so stay well away from me!"

Ginny was already moving toward the stairs before her mother started screaming at her to go to her room. As expected she would have an appointment with her father later.

If Ginny shocked Molly, then the twins compounded the feeling by heading for the stairs. "Where are you two off to?"

It was George that answered, "If Ginny hadn't smacked him then one of us probably would have, we deserve the same punishment as Ginny."

"Just do one thing for us," Fred said, "Please tell us the prat was found at the bottom of the garden and isn't really our brother."

Molly was left staring at her youngest son, sitting on the floor with a bright red hand print on his cheek and definitely not smirking anymore. She was aware there was a serious problem now and wished Arthur didn't have to work late tonight.

Percy had heard the whole thing kick off, Weasleys didn't do things quietly. After all the shouting and slamming of doors, the Burrow had settled down into what passed for normal in the Weasley household. He continued studying until a knock at his door was followed by his father poking his head into the room, "Son, could you come down a moment? Your mother and I would like a word."

Thus Percy found himself sitting at the kitchen table, trying to figure out what he'd done wrong.

"Percy we need you to be honest with us, there is a fracture in our family that cannot be allowed to continue. On the one hand, Ginny and the twins are very attached to the Potters while Ron seems to blame them for all his failings. We are assuming the truth lies somewhere in the middle and are hoping you can help us find it, since you would appear not to be involved in this argument."

Percy thought for a moment before answering, "The Potters have had a massive impact at Hogwarts, even in Gryffindor there is only one voice raised against them, Ron. He also has no social skills, meaning every time he opens his mouth Ron insults at least one of them. Lord Potter totally destroyed Draco Malfoy in a duel because he insulted the Lady Hermione. Even with cheating, the Slytherin was not in the same league as him yet Ron continues to push his luck at every opportunity. Fred and George still play pranks but are much more serious about their studies now so you may be pleasantly surprised by their report cards. Ginny though has the ability and drive to eclipse all of us, the girl is a powerful, intelligent witch who constantly strives to keep up with her friends."

This was not what the Weasley parents expected to hear but Percy wasn't finished yet, "Ron refuses all academic help and his most

important times of day are breakfast, lunch and dinner. Without mum in the castle to curtail him, the amounts he eats and his lack of table manners are the talk of Hogwarts. Instead of shaming him into doing anything about this, he appears to revel in the notoriety, without noticing that the places around him at the table are always empty."

Molly was left in a quandary, she'd just banned three of her children from associating with people who were apparently exceedingly good influences on them. She and Arthur decided to sleep on it and see if things looked different in the morning.

Things did indeed look different, the Prophet headline proclaimed that the Potters were being awarded the Order of Merlin. This was the people she'd banned her children from seeing? Molly was sure she'd made a mistake when Ron began a tirade between mouthfuls of breakfast.

"It's ridiculous, giving them Order of Merlin's just because their last name is Potter. What did they do that was so special? They ended up needing rescued themselves!"

Ginny and the twins sat eating in silence, this bothered Molly more than she could account for. "Your friends are awarded the Order of Merlin and you've nothing to say? I thought you would at least be excited for them."

Ginny didn't answer her mother, instead she asked her father a question. "Dad, who were the last two people to win that award?"

Arthur was surprised at the question until he thought about it, "Oh dear, Peter Pettigrew and Albus Dumbledore."

The Knut finally dropped for Molly, "You knew about this and didn't tell us?"

It was George who answered, "When we are told things in confidence then that's where it stays."

Arthur interrupted before another argument could start, "Having met them, and from Ginny's question, I would surmise that the Potters turned the awards down?"

Molly was about to tell her husband not to be silly when the looks on three of her children's faces said he was right.

"How did you guess?" said an impressed George.

"I do know how the ministry works, I would say Fudge attempted to boost his popularity by announcing this before asking the Potters?"

Three nods followed from children who were seeing their father in a whole new light.

"Can I also assume that we shall discover the reason why the Potters are leaving Hogwarts shortly?"

Admiration came with the nods now, "Very well, we shall sit and discuss the Potter situation at that time. Speaking of time, the holding off this event at Potter Manor on Saturday wouldn't be to offer public support to McGonagall would it?"

Ginny was panicking now, "Dad, you can't mention this to anyone. Things are happening today that certain people mustn't find out about."

"Don't worry dear, I won't say a word. Can I also assume that the paper tomorrow will be an interesting read as well?"

"Dad that was amazing!"

"Bloody brilliant!"

Molly was too shocked to reprimand Fred for his language, Arthur wasn't finished with his surprises yet though. "Ginny, for hitting your brother yesterday, you will carry out his chores for the rest of the week."

Ginny reckoned that was a fair punishment, she put her head down and said, "Yes dad." Had she seen the smirk on Ron's face Ginny would probably have smacked him again.

That smirk was soon gone though, "Ron, this will free your time and allow your mother to go over all your Hogwarts coursework with you. Having to repeat a year was an unfortunate occurrence, failing again would be unforgivable. Is that understood?"

Ron couldn't trust himself not to say the wrong thing so he wisely just nodded. Chores were preferable to lessons any day, his father had one last order though.

"You will also learn some table manners and stop behaving like a greedy pig, failure to do so will see your mother prepare a plate of food that you will not be allowed to add extra helpings to."

Ronald Weasley was devastated, their mother only threatened to stop the other three seeing their friends. His father had just promised to limit his intake of food, that was much more severe in his book. Even after getting smacked by his sister, Ron was getting the worst of it as usual.

-oOoOo-

The three Potters were snuggled up in bed, reflecting on how their day had played out. Their interview had left Rita gobsmacked, Sirius had to confirm the facts three times before she started to believe him about the Malfoys. They understood her journalistic hesitancy, it would be a brave newspaper that led with the headline that Voldemort wasn't dead.

They had now done all they could, the situation was out of their control and in the hands of other people now. At least they would get to see the rest of the Quidditch players on Saturday, except for Oliver Wood that is. McGonagall was adamant he would be receiving no award from Hogwarts so they didn't want to invite him, only for the Gryffindor Quidditch captain to be left standing there like a lemon while the rest of them got awards. Hopefully Oliver had learned his lesson so there was no need to rub his nose in it.

Harry asked his girls a question that had troubled him since Professor Sprout mentioned it yesterday, "Do you think the Basilisk would have made an appearance whether we were playing that day or not?"

"There is no possible way we could know the answer to that," said Hermione, "What I will say is I think we have less time to prepare than we hoped. Don't ask me to explain it, it's more a feeling I have rather than any fact based conclusion."

Luna was giggling, "Hermione going with her gut, this has been quite the couple of days."

Harry held them both tight, "You know she's right though, it must be ominous if our Hermione here is feeling it as well. We're going to have to use our Hogwarts free time to step-up our training and hope we're ready when Voldemort re-appears."

No more words were used or needed, Luna cuddled her husband while Hermione kissed him. They'd known Voldemort wasn't dead but the idea that his return could be imminent had their entire family on edge. He'd been like a bogymen figure to them while they were growing up, now that he'd crawled out the closet and solidified as a legitimate monster, they were being forced to face their destiny that some stupid bloody prophecy had forced on them. Just because they didn't believe in prophecy didn't get them out from under this one, as long as Voldemort considered Harry a threat he would be coming after them.

Muggles may not believe in dragons but that didn't stop a few being eaten by the giant creatures when they stumbled across a Hebridean Black or Welsh Green in the wild. The cowardly lion might claim to believe in spooks but it was the wicked witch who really wanted to kill the terrified creature. Voldemort might not be green with a nose that could be used to cut a wedding cake but was a bigger threat than a whole herd of dragons, even without flying monkeys as henchmen.

-oOoOo-

George Goyle was certainly no flying monkey though was the only henchman available to Voldemort at the moment. His master had suddenly grown more agitated than usual, hence his current macabre midnight mission.

He was sneaking through a muggle village to carry out his master's orders, planted straight into his skull by the wraith like being that didn't possess the power of speech. Instructions wasn't the only thing the dark lord could plant in your head, if he wanted you to feel pain then that's exactly what you did, gut-wrenching, bowl loosening absolute pure agony.

George had to find a baby and then burn its house to the ground in the hope of disguising the fact that he'd snatched the infant. His master intended to use the baby as a vessel that George would then transport back to Britain. Nursemaid was not a role that appeared anywhere on the death eater recruitment package. Knowing what his master did to those who complained, or worse failed him, George had no intention of doing either.

An unsuspecting and unaware Albanian family were about to meet with tragedy at the hands of a death eater as the first stage of the adult Voldemort's pursuit for a new body began.

Thanks for reading.

Chapter 16

The magical community awoke that morning to discover the world as they knew it had radically altered, the herald of that change was none other than award winning journalist Rita Skeeter. The Prophet readers were left feeling as if they were caught in a battle as revelation after revelation was cast upon them, leaving them reeling and desperate for some relief. Rita's article didn't provide any relief but instead offered up the next best thing. A target that they could vent their anger at, for being deliberately misled and downright lied to for so long. Rita offered up Cornelius Fudge, Minister of Magic.

Cornelius was in his office though hoped he was actually at home, still tucked-up in bed and suffering from a horrendous nightmare. Anything was better than this! The 'this' in question happened to be today's edition of the Prophet that sat open on his desk. Any one of the headlines here would see him in serious trouble, all of them combined was a broadside designed to sink his term at the ministry.

The Potters' were not only refusing the awards he'd exclusively announced, they were leaving Hogwarts. Headline grabbing as this was, it paled into insignificance against the real horror that would break him.

You-Know-Who not dead – truth being hidden by We-Know-Who

The article then proceeded to accurately describe what transpired behind the scenes at the ill fated Quidditch match and the subsequent death of Draco Malfoy. The most damaging indictment of the minister was the evidence proving that the dark lord was not deceased yet he wanted to hide this from everyone by throwing a mother into Azkaban for murder.

The writing was on the wall, floor, ceiling and windows for Fudge, this was politically un-survivable. Those blasted Potters had even come out in support of Bones, Longbottom and McGonagall. This denied Cornelius the pleasure of at least taking a few people down with him, he reached into a drawer for some parchment and ink. He began scratching out a letter, knowing that his resignation would be the last time he would sign something as the minister of magic.

-oOoOo-

The impact on the Weasley household was just as devastating, "How much of this did you know about beforehand?" Molly demanded of three of her children.

Undaunted Fred replied, "All of it."

Molly was fighting to control her legendary temper but it was a struggle, "You knew he was back yet still wanted to stay friends with the Potters?"

George fielded this one, "They told us straight to our face that it might become dangerous being friends with them. They said they would understand if we chose not to, everyone there said yes."

Molly was about to embark on one of her rants when her youngest child showed wisdom far beyond her years, she said the one thing guaranteed to make her mother stop and think. "Neville said it best and spoke for all of us. Yes it might be dangerous to be friends with the Potters if he's back but the Longbottom's and Weasley's will never support the dark. That already places us in danger, together we are stronger than we are apart."

Arthur had to clear his throat before speaking, his daughters words had left him choking with emotion, chiefly pride. The tears slowly leaking from his wife's eyes also told the patriarch who had come tops in this discussion. "It would seem that your friends are not just smart but honourable as well, these are traits every parent strives to teach their children. Your mother and I had a long discussion on this subject last night, we think you should continue your friendship with the Potters."

Arthur never got to say anymore as he suddenly had a lap full of a crying eleven-year-old, "Oh daddy thanks!" was about all she could manage to say.

Molly attempted to regain some control over the situation, she couldn't fault her husband's logic or decision but was still determined

to heal the rift in her family. "Ginny your punishment still stands, I will not have members of this family fighting amongst each other. Ron will begin working on his attitude though I demand an effort be made from everyone here."

Ginny left her father's knee to hug her mother, before lightly skipping out the door to begin Ron's chores. Ginny had been so worried that she wasn't going to be allowed to see her friends again that even double chores couldn't put a dent in her good mood.

Arthur was a careful and studious man who understood that it was sometimes the things not being said that defined a situation. Today's articles made no mention of why the dark lord was after the Potters. This was not a conversation for the breakfast table though, he would get the twins alone before asking that particular question. He had a strong suspicion they knew the answer, Arthur was also pretty certain his wife wouldn't like the answer. Better to leave it alone for now.

-oOoOo-

Hermione was wishing she could leave the questions she was being asked alone but didn't see how that was possible, these were their friends and deserved some answers. Donna and Claire had cornered her in the girl's bathroom and were asking some difficult questions.

Donna didn't react too well to her silence, "Hermione we're not blind you know, on Monday Luna appeared terrified and you all seemed to have the weight of the world on your shoulders."

Claire nodded her agreement, "We're your friends and we're all concerned about you. Even Matt managed to drag his attention off Jillian long enough to notice something was wrong, so that should give you some idea of how bad you are at hiding it."

A quick conversation over their bond led to Hermione revealing at least part of the truth, "Ok I can't go into details because the law won't allow me to." Coming from anyone else that would sound like so much shit, her friends could easily see it was the truth though, they just didn't know it was against the magical laws.

"Remember we told you someone was trying to kill Harry?" Both girls were standing there with their eyes nearly popping out their head at this, they had been thinking along the lines of one of their parents objecting to their relationship. This was way beyond their imagination.

"On Saturday there was an attempt made on our lives and Luna ended up unconscious, it gave us all quite a fright and as you can imagine our parents are going nuts about it."

Claire and Donna shared a quick glance, neither girl could imagine what their friends had come through and really felt for Hermione for having to experience it.

Hermione though misread the glance and accompanying brief silence, "I realise this may place you in danger as our friends so will understand if you want to change that."

The entire mood of the conversation changed as Donna posed another question, "Did you say that to your other friends?" Hermione's nod let Donna continue, "May I ask what their answer was?"

Hermione didn't have a clue what was happening here but it didn't sound good, she could feel Luna was already on her way to offer support. "They all said they still wanted to be our friends."

Claire was actually getting angry now, "Yet you thought that we, who've known you a hell of a lot longer than them were going to walk away and leave you?"

It was tears of relief that were running down Hermione's cheeks as Luna came bursting into the bathroom, Harry also felt the relief which was the only reason he wasn't heading there himself.

The four girls were now involved in a group hug that helped everyone, Claire tried to apologise, "I'm sorry for getting angry Hermione but losing our friendship is just not going to happen."

Emma noticed when she picked them up from school that the three of them looked happier than at any time since the Quidditch match, after

hearing what happened she shared their joy. What Emma feared were the children getting so embroiled in the magical world that they left her world behind. Their non-magical friends were a massive part of that world and Emma was delighted at their reaction.

She started planning to inviting them over to stay for a day or two after the wedding, with only them and possibly Nym in the house their only worry would be containing Danni. As Danni's latest thing was to wandlessly change the car radio station until she found music that she liked, that may prove a very large problem.

-oOoOo-

Tabitha Diggory knew she was going to have to speak with her husband, Amos was as hyper as a four-year-old on Christmas Eve. He was normally a calm and steady sort of person until it was something involving Cedric. When their son had written home that he'd been made the Quidditch captain Amos didn't see the fact that Hufflepuff hadn't won a game in years, all anyone heard about was his son the Quidditch captain.

Now Cedric was dating the niece of the acting minister and heading off to the Potters for the weeend, where the parents had been invited to a party tomorrow. Amos was actually buzzing with excitement yet Cedric had asked her to have a word with his dad, this was not going to be easy.

"Amos dear, we need to talk. There is no easy way to break this to you so I'll just come right out and say it. It's perfectly acceptable to be proud of our son but it's not socially acceptable to bore everyone to death boasting about him."

Amos now resembled that same four-year-old after having been told Christmas was cancelled, "Tabitha, what do you mean."

"Amos, Cedric is a son we can both be proud of in every way. We've raised him so well that when he has a problem he feels comfortable coming to us and discussing them."

"Problems, what problems? Is it something at school? Trouble with the Bones girl now that her aunt is certain to become the next minister?"

Tabatha stopped her husband before his imagination ran away with him. "Amos, it's a lot simpler than that. Our son speaks very highly of the Potters and values their friendship almost as much as that of his girlfriend. He's told me the Potters are very private people and also, he's at an age now where your continual boasting embarrasses him, especially if done in front of his friends or girlfriend." She actually felt sorry for her husband but felt it would be better coming from her rather than Cedric, that's a conversation she definitely didn't want to take place.

"I'm also sure that first thing Monday morning you will be telling anyone who stands still long enough how our family spent Saturday afternoon."

Amos was getting prepared to refute that allegation before realising that his wife, and it would seem his son knew him too well.

"As I said, Cedric is a son to be proud of but that is not the issue here. The Potters' privacy keeps them alive, Cedric told me that Rita Skeeter has visited the manor on a number of occasions. We both know her reputation as a reporter yet not one hint of its location has ever appeared in any of her articles. For the sake of your son and his friends' safety all we're asking is that you tone it down a bit.

Amos could see the sense behind his wife's argument, perhaps it would be better just saying he was at the Potters without giving out any details. That would keep people coming back for more, instead of trying to escape at the earliest opportunity.

'Ok, I'll do my best. He is a son to be proud of though."

Tabitha gave a sigh of relief, she wasn't sure how that was going to play out. Appealing to his sense of protecting the Potters appeared to have been the right card to play. She loved her husband dearly and shared his pride in Cedric, just not as vociferously!

-oOoOo-

Angelina Johnson was very excited, sitting talking over with her parents about tomorrow for what seemed like the twentieth time. They'd thankfully missed the Quidditch match at Hogwarts due to travelling difficulties for muggles, the Leaky Cauldron in London was a four hour drive from the midlands. This time they would be travelling by portkey.

"So the prime minister of magical Britain will be there?" her dad asked again, he couldn't quite take it all in at the moment.

Angelina gave the same answer she had to all the other times he'd asked the same question, "Yes dad, Madam Bones is the acting minister of magic but no one seriously believes she will face any challengers for the leadership."

The follow up question was the same one as well, "And there will also be a couple of lords there?"

"Yes dad, though Harry and Sirius prefer to be called just that, Harry and Sirius! There won't be any titles on display, Madam Bones is there as Susan's aunt while Madam Longbottom is Neville's grandmother and guardian."

She was trying not to smile as she repeated herself for the umpteenth time. The only thing her parents had to compare this with was watching the Queen's garden parties at Buckingham Palace on the telly, she could only hope they didn't bow or curtsy to anyone. Angelina had truthfully told her parents there was no colour bias in the magical world. As her father was of Afro-Caribbean descent, he thought this was one of the best things about his daughter being a witch.

She didn't have the heart to tell him that she faced a whole new set of discriminations because her parents were not magical, irrespective of colour. Angelina couldn't be happier that her parents' introduction into the magical world would be at the Potters, the one place where she could be sure no discrimination would ever be tolerated.

There one and only venture into Diagon Alley saw them totally overwhelmed by the different culture, since then she had always went with Alicia and her family.

She could understand her parents' excitement and shared it, this was a rare opportunity to show the best of her world to her family. The magical community just didn't seem to cater for non-magical parents. They were expected to place their eleven-year-old children on a train and forget about them after that, she appreciated more than most what the Potters were doing by keeping a foot firmly planted in both worlds. They were creating options that no one had ever thought of before, all because they chose to be different. All three Johnsons were looking forward to tomorrow.

-oOoOo-

The atmosphere inside Potter manor on Friday night was very relaxed, after the week the trio had this was exactly what they needed.

For Harry, watching the purebloods as King Louie sang "I want to be like you" was almost as entertaining as watching the movie itself. At Luna's favourite part, where a disguised Baloo joins King Louie, Fred, George and Hannah all ended up on the floor with laughter.

Ginny actually had tears in her eyes as she laughed along with everyone else. They all could see Luna was the one needing cheering-up this week so Harry had insisted her favourite movie was the one they all watched tonight. Ginny glanced at her blond friend who was sitting with Harry's arm around her as she sang along to every song.

Ginny was also looking forward to tomorrow, she was sure that her mother had learned enough about the Potters by this time not to mention the subject of Ron's non-invitation. Ginny was even more confident that if her mother made the attempt, her dad would put a stop to it immediately.

-oOoOo-

Emma Granger immediately graduated toward the Johnsons, who were clearly floundering and out of their depth. The grateful parents treated Emma's appearance as a drowning man would a lifeboat. As Emma took them under her wing, a delighted Angelina couldn't thank her enough.

Emma shrugged off her thanks as unnecessary, "This is all new to me as well, I know about magic but not the way their society works. I have two daughters who are both witches but I refuse to let them forsake their upbringing for a purely magical one. We all want what's best for our children and for our extended family this is it. They have friends on both sides of the magical divide and have actually introduced them to each other."

Amelia Bones had been passing and stopped to speak with them when she heard this, much to the delight of the senior Johnsons. "Susan has spoken to me about this and how much she not only enjoyed the experiences, but about how much she is learning from them as well."

The Johnson parents were shocked when their daughter laughed along with the minister of magic, their pride knew no bounds as Angelina spoke to her. "Yes, I've certainly noticed the differences with the twins. They went from clueless about my life outside Hogwarts to asking me questions that actually make sense."

Of course this was their cue for the twins to make an appearance, "We resent that remark!"

"Yes Angelina, saying out loud that we make sense. Have you any idea what that could do to our reputations?"

Fred was now giving the girl his best 'puppy dog eyes' look, "We used to like you Angelina, there was no need to go and insult us like that."

She was now laughing and totally relaxed, well as relaxed as it was possible to get in the company of these two. "Mum, Dad, I'd like to introduce you to Fred and George Weasley. Don't believe a word they say and under no circumstances accept anything they offer you to eat or drink."

It was George's turn for the 'puppy eyes', "Now she deliberately wounds us, we would never do anything like that."

His twin of course agreed, before giving the reason behind their good behaviour. "Yeah especially since Harry promised to set Hermione and Luna on us if we pulled any pranks today. Sorry Emma but those two are downright scary when riled."

Emma couldn't disagree but it was Angelina's mum who asked her a question that got everyone thinking. "Excuse me for asking Mrs Granger but how do the children manage to cope when they're basically living two lives."

Emma could see even Amelia was interested in the answer to that question, she did her best to answer the woman truthfully. Anyone could see the concern for her own daughter was what prompted it. "I won't lie and say it's easy, it can be very difficult for them. In one world they're Lord Potter and Ladies Luna and Hermione, throw in the whole boy-who-lived rubbish and that would be enough for anyone to deal with. In the other world they do their best to be just normal kids but normal kids don't have a white phoenix, magic and get married before their teens. I think the hardest part about this is lying to their muggle friends. Luna said it best when she stated that all she wanted to be was Mrs Potter, a situation that isn't available in either world."

This provided Amelia and the others with a point of view none of them had considered before.

The Johnson parents were very happy, they had heard a lot about these two young wizards and seeing the way their daughter fitted into this esteemed company helped assure them they made the right decision by putting their daughter on that train. Hearing how another non-magical parent struggled with these decisions also provided some relief with the knowledge that they weren't alone in agonising over this. Their emotions shifted up another gear as the headmistress of Hogwarts made her announcement and presentations.

Minerva knew all eyes were on her, this was one part of the job that took some getting used to. On an occasion like this though it was

definitely worth it. "Last week most of us watched on as a potential disaster was turned into one of the proudest moments in my time at Hogwarts. The idea behind today's event was that if we as their professors were proud of them, it wasn't too difficult to imagine how you as parents felt."

Most of the invited guests hadn't a clue what Minerva was up to and she was actually enjoying letting her Slytherin side out to play, "We at Hogwarts were determined that their quick thinking, bravery, superb flying and fighting skills should not go unrewarded. For defending their friends, fellow Quidditch players, families and students of Hogwarts, we would like to award them all these special medals for services to the school."

The room erupted into applause as the players from last Saturday were called forward to receive gold medals with the crest of Hogwarts on them. They were all delighted with their reward but McGonagall wasn't finished yet.

"To commemorate what I consider to be one of the proudest moments in the history of Hogwarts, we are replacing the Quidditch cup. The new award will be known as the Harmony trophy to commemorate these players who all worked in harmony to save the school and everyone in it."

Her next comment shocked the entire room, "The medals these brave young people are now wearing were struck from the original cup that was melted down, a magical replacement copy sits inside the trophy cabinet purely to preserve the names that were engraved on it. We all felt this was a better use for the original."

All the medal winners were in awe of this, they were literally wearing a piece of Hogwarts history around their necks. Harry suddenly had a revelation, "My dad held this!" before racing off to show his grandparents his new prized possession.

Augusta approached Minerva as all the medal winners were being congratulated by their parents and friends, "That was a wonderful thing you just did, the Potters turned down Order of Merlin's without

blinking their eyes yet it was blatantly obvious how much those medals meant to them."

"With the cash injection we received from the Basilisk carcass, Hogwarts can easily afford to commission a new trophy. I and many others believe those students saved the school, this was the best way we could think of rewarding them. Every Quidditch player who ever came through Hogwarts dreams of possessing the Quidditch cup, that group now own a piece of it. This means starting a new tradition but traditions have got to start somewhere!"

Sirius managed to get a moment with Amelia and asked her for a private word, she expected this but intended to play it by the numbers.

"Amelia, what can you tell me about Cissi?"

"She will be spending some time in Azkaban, it's simply unavoidable." Amelia could clearly see this was not what Sirius wanted to hear so attempted to explain. "She will not be charged with Draco's death, rather the death eater activities she confessed to. Cissi can't be allowed to just walk away from her crimes, the lawyer you hired is negotiating where she will plead guilty to some charges and be sentenced to about six months in Azkaban. It won't be the high security wing you were locked in and she will be allowed plenty of visitors."

Sirius had hoped she could be spared that yet Amelia was nothing if not fair. At least Cissi would be a free woman by the summer and then be able to begin rebuilding her life.

The Johnsons were really enjoying their day, this was a rare opportunity for them to observe their daughter interacting with her magical friends. It was also slightly disconcerting to see how at ease she was when being congratulated on her award by the minister of magic.

The parents had never even met their member of parliament yet here was their daughter introducing them to her equivalent of the prime minister, exulted company indeed.

Minerva made sure to take the time to speak with Maia and Emma, "I'm really sorry to see your children leaving Hogwarts, the positive changes for which they have been the catalyst have changed our school for the better. I understand their reason for leaving yet would like to say that, should circumstances change, we would welcome them back with open arms."

It was Emma who cryptically replied, "If circumstances change, we would be delighted to send our children back to Hogwarts."

Cedric was still struggling to come to terms with the medal around his neck and the beautiful girl by his side. What surprised him the most though was his father's reaction to what happened today. His simple 'well done' and quick hug had left Cedric thanking providence he'd had that chat with his mother. He half expected his dad to be doing cartwheels and back-flips around the room, this new restrained version of his dad was eminently preferable.

Nym was the one wanting to perform cartwheels and back-flips, the minister of magic had handed her an application form for the auror department. Not just a blank form, but one already completed with Amelia Bones signature as sponsor. This was a gold plated acceptance straight into the program. When Amelia said she'd made enquiries regarding her and wanted to get in first before any of the other departments at the ministry got wind of just how good she was, well cartwheels and back-flips might seem a bit tame. Nymphadora Tonks was one happy witch! The Johnson parents couldn't take their eyes off her as her hair cycled through more colours than there was in the rainbow.

-oOoOo-

Voldemort did indeed hate and despise muggles, that didn't mean he couldn't pass for one. Tom Riddle spent most of his youth living as one, giving him a working knowledge of them. This was how George Goyle found himself heading towards Dover by train with a very ugly baby as a travelling companion. Getting into Britain as a muggle should be easy with his master feeding constant instructions directly into his mind.

Without this George would have been at a total loss. Well not quite total, he had discovered that scowling at anyone who approached to see the baby worked just as well on the muggles. He had toyed with the idea of some muggle repelling charms but they didn't want to draw any undue attention to them whatsoever. A man travelling with a baby was not an uncommon sight, from experience George could say it beat the hell out of walking!

-oOoOo-

The Potter trio began another week at Wyedean High in much better spirits after having such a great weekend. Hogwarts was also re-opening today, with the express leaving Kings Cross for Scotland at eleven. With them still getting to see their magical friends on the weekends, leaving Hogwarts wasn't as big a wrench as they thought it would be. Hearing that they would be welcomed back at any time was also a bit of a boost.

Stepping up their training while the family prepared for a wedding was also not a big problem. Since the trio were the only ones with an actual schedule to take into consideration, all the planning and preparation was done around that.

Things were beginning to settle into a routine for the family once more though none of them could shake the feeling of impending doom. It felt very much like the calm before the storm because that's exactly what it was. A hurricane was heading in their direction.

-oOoOo-

Greg Goyle's routine was shattered when he received an owl from his father, he was aware the DMLE 'wanted a word' with his dad but they weren't exactly hunting him down. Greg's instructions were simple, find out everything he could about Harry Potter. No detail too small as everything could and would be used.

Even these simple instructions caused a problem for the boy who couldn't pass the first year course at Hogwarts, He quickly wrote back saying the Potters had left the school.

If it wasn't for the fact his father didn't want anyone to know he was in the country, Greg was sure the next letter he received would have been a howler. The letter was simplicity itself, no excuses will be accepted. With those five words Greg knew he would have to come up with something, he seriously considered copying details out of some prophet articles about the Potters before having what for him would be considered a brainwave.

He had an 'in' with Ron Weasley who hated the Potters more than any Slytherin, the rest of his family appeared to get on fine with them and still visited at the weekends.

Ron was going to be his unwitting source for all things Harry Potter. The main problem was getting the information out of the Gryffindor without him suspecting anything was amiss, this was going to take finesse worthy of any Slytherin. It was time for Greg to realise his potential and show why the hat had sorted him there.

Greg had his opportunity next period in history of magic, time for his master plan. "Hey Ron, you any idea what school the Potters go to now?"

"Naw, I heard them talking about somewhere called Wyedean High but that doesn't sound like any magical school I've ever heard of."

This was easier than Greg thought, apparently he was a natural at this finesse thing. "I know you don't like them but even you have to admit what they did to that Basilisk was pretty amazing. They could have used their phoenix to just bugger off and left everyone in the shit."

Ron was shaking his head, "That was their baby sister the phoenix grabbed out the stadium. Ginny says they couldn't think straight knowing she was in danger, the three of them would do anything for her."

Greg was sure his dad would be proud of him as he watched Ron fall asleep while Binns droned on and on. All he had to do now was try to remember the information, he really couldn't write it down just now. Anyone taking notes in history of magic would stick out like a sore thumb.

-oOoOo-

His only remaining death eater, who was using his only remaining hand to accomplish the task, robed Lord Voldemort as he stepped out the massive cauldron. Bertha Jerkins was the only other witness to this event, since she was currently tied to a gravestone and would be dead inside the next ten minutes, neither of the two men present were too bothered by that fact.

Tom would ideally have liked to use a more powerful enemy's blood, yes she worked for the ministry but the Potter brat's would have been the best. He was forced to be realistic though on two counts, the baby's body that he had inhabited was beginning to break down and then there was the calibre of help available to him. Bertha here was probably at the top end of the scale of witches and wizards that Goyle was capable of capturing. Now that he had regained a body they could raise the bar by a considerable margin, no more low-ranking ministry workers for him. He had his sights set on the death of Harry Potter, nothing less would do.

Tom Riddle was aware that Wyedean High must be a muggle school, he was also aware that five minutes in a phone box placing a call to directory enquiries would provide him with the address he needed.

Combined with the additional information from Goyle junior, Potter wouldn't stand a chance. To celebrate his good fortune Tom decided to reward his faithful servant, with a bright and shiny new metallic hand.

Bertha Jenkins wasn't going to be so lucky but as Voldemort said to her, if you had to die what better place to do so than this? The sobbing witch didn't see the funny side of that remark, seconds later she wasn't seeing anything anymore.

-oOoOo-

It was a cold, crisp morning in Sedbury as Emma dropped the trio off at school, Danni was waving enthusiastically as the car pulled away. She understood this was Thursday so they would be driving into

Bristol where she would be spending the whole day being spoiled by her mum. Danni was a happy toddler.

Third period in maths Luna suddenly shot bolt upright as the colour drained from her face, this immediately concerned Claire who was sitting next to her. "Luna, what's the matter?"

"Oh nothing, I'm fine!" Her body language and skin tone screaming otherwise. Luna fed the image she'd just seen to her bond mates, Voldemort and a henchman were coming to Wyedean High. That wasn't the worst of it though, the henchman held little Danni in his arms!

Thanks for reading

A/N Wyedean High is a real school on the Welsh border, brownie points for guessing why I chose it.

The final chapter

The image of a large masked man holding Danni while his companion, a thing that could only be Voldemort, fired curses at the front of the school froze the trio. It was only Donna nudging Hermione that got her thinking again, "Oh sorry Donna, zoned out there." Inside she was screaming to her bond mates, 'We need to get people out the school! Any ideas and we need them quick?'

There were no replies but the piercing sound of the fire alarm demanded everyone's attention, and told Hermione that Harry had taken action. As their teacher was herding them out the class toward the fire assembly point, thankfully at the rear of the school, the Potters quietly slipped away into a toilet.

Hermione was in tears, "How did they get their hands on Danni, what's happened to mum?"

As Harry attempted to offer Hermione some comfort, Luna called for help, Cas immediately appeared in her human form.

"Cas, Danni has been abducted and will very shortly be brought here. We need you to find Emma as quick as you can and give her all the help she needs."

Cas so wanted to stay and protect her children but she had been given a direct order and Emma was family too.

A quick hug that encompassed all four and Cas was off, the trio rapidly made their way along the now deserted corridors. With Cas dispatched to help her mother, Hermione tried to pull herself together. Her sister and bond mates needed her now.

-oOoOo-

Cas knew Emma's routine well, she would have dropped the three off at school then headed to Bristol for a therapeutic day of shopping with Danni. This was Emma's time in the muggle world and Cas had on occasion accompanied her. A quick scan with her eyes showed everything looking normal with no disturbance whatsoever,

apparently Danni's abduction hadn't been discovered yet. That worried Cas more than she could say.

Rapidly making her way along Emma's favourite shops, Cas was both delighted and dismayed to spot Emma walking aimlessly though apparently unharmed through the store. Cas surmised that she must have been doing this for some time as the store security man was keeping a very close eye on her, probably thought she was a shoplifter or something.

Cas took Emma gently by the arm and quickly led her outside, as soon as she got her into a blind spot of a delivery entrance, Cas transported both of them back to the manor. It was easy to lift the confundus charm that had been placed on Emma and the elf's decision to wait until they got home was instantly vindicated, Emma started screaming and sobbing.

"He took Danni! I just stood there as he wheeled the buggy with her in it away. Part of me was screaming to rip the bastards head off but I just stood there and did nothing. Oh Cas, what's happening?"

Cas was struggling to believe Emma got off with just a Confundus charm, she expected to find a dead body. Obviously taking Danni from a very public place had affected the severity of the curse they chose to use. "It would appear you were hit with a charm that confused you so they could simply walk off with Danni. Luna says Voldemort has her and is coming to the school for them."

Sobs now racked Emma's body, "Go Cas, help them any way you can."

This was exactly what the little elf wanted to hear, she called for Dobby to assist their mistress before popping back to the school. By pure bad luck Maia and Sirius were out wedding shopping today, and Cas didn't have time to go searching for them. She had children that needed her.

-oOoOo-

Harry, Hermione and Luna walked out the front door of the school just as Voldemort had began to blast reducto's through the windows, this was his attempt to gain their attention. The muscle wearing the death eater mask had Danni in his arms and a wand pointed at her.

"Ah Harry Potter, we meet once more. Though I'm delighted to say it will be for the last time."

All three did nothing but stare at their sister in the arms of the death eater.

"Now here's the deal Harry, you die today and these three young ladies get to live. Lord Voldemort has no quarrel with them."

Harry didn't believe a word of it but couldn't move or think of anything but the deadly danger to Danni. As a green curse shot toward him, a flash of flame announced the arrival of Hedwig. She intercepted the curse and burst into a plume of ash.

It was Voldemort's turn to be frozen in his tracks at the appearance of the white phoenix.

The problem was that no one was watching Danni, the little witch was not pleased at this bad man who tried to harm her big brother. She had wondered what was going on and was about to start screaming when they arrived at a very familiar building. Thinking she was going to see her siblings kept her quiet for now. That was before the curse was aimed at her brother.

"No hurt Harry!" she screamed.

The sheer power in the child's voice caused Voldemort to turn around, this probably saved his life as a small car shot out the car park and hit him a glancing blow, rather than crushing him outright. The 'glancing blow' though still flung him right over the car and left him sprawled on the pavement.

This was the scene that Cas popped into, quickly sizing up her options she magically broke both of George Goyle's arms as she

snatched an exhausted Danni away from him. The little tyke was now almost asleep after her quite incredible feat of magic.

She shouted toward the trio, "Emma's fine, just worried about you. I'll be right back as soon as I take Danni home."

Cas popping out of there threw the switch that galvanised the Potters into action, it was almost like a Popeye cartoon when the sailor ate his favourite can of spinach. Luna scooped up a baby Hedwig as they entered fighting mode, this animal had dared to go after their family. He wasn't going to get another chance, this ended today. What they felt when Sirius asked Maia out was nothing compared to the anger and determination coursing through their veins at the moment.

Voldemort banished the offending car directly at them, trying to buy himself some time to get back on his feet. The Potters were already moving though, wands drawn as they prepared to fight back.

-oOoOo-

The general confusion caused by trying to organise over a thousand students in an unscheduled fire alarm was magnified by a factor of at least ten when the explosions began. Matt turned round to speak with Harry, only to discover his friend wasn't there. A quick word amongst their group of friends quickly established none of the three of them were there.

Donna's hand shot to her mouth, "You don't think it's that murderer do you? Maybe he's tracked them down?"

Not taking time to listen to anymore or anyone, Matt was heading for the front of the school, Jamie and the three girls right behind him. They had no thoughts on what they would do when they got there or that it might be dangerous. Their friends could be in danger and they were determined to be there for them.

They arrived at the front doors as the VW beetle belonging to Miss Canon was flying toward their three friends Those same three friends appeared to dodge it effortlessly before firing some kind of lasers at

the creepiest and ugliest guy it had ever been their displeasure to lay eyes upon.

The light show that followed was more spectacular than any rock concert and fireworks display combined. When one of the lights was diverted onto the headmaster's parked car, his Volvo immediately became an inferno. Suddenly and chillingly they realised just how much danger their three friends were in. The group also discovered they were little more than spectators, and it was a very good idea not to let one of those light beams hit you.

Jillian couldn't take her eyes off the way Luna and Hermione appeared to weave around Harry like participants in some deadly mating dance, considering Harry at the moment was the hottest thing on two legs Jillian had ever seen, only her friends in deadly danger could draw her attention away.

They had now witnessed how deadly those beam things could be yet there they stood, defiantly facing up to this monster to protect their boyfriend. Most of the attacks looked to be centred on Harry but he moved like quicksilver or things would suddenly appear in front of the beams to keep him safe.

Harry meanwhile appeared to be concentrating on fighting back, with his two girls protecting him he shot beam after coloured beam at the man.

Jillian had been a little embarrassed at the furore she had caused by attempting to be Harry's third girlfriend, watching as Hermione's cheek was cut open by flying debris, which seemed to see Harry redouble his efforts, illustrated just how futile that attempt was. Her two friends were putting their lives on the line for a boy they obviously loved. Harry would hopefully always be her friend but anything else was going to be a no, his life was a little too weird and wild for her, she could easily do without the whole 'someone is trying to kill me' shit too!

Matt pulled her down as a beam came quite close, Jillian realised she'd zoned out there for a second. Not so much her life flashing before her eyes as her choices, Matt with his arm protectively around

her confirmed she'd made the right one for her. Luna and Hermione were both now bleeding from multiple cuts as they continued to protect Harry, Jillian in the same situation would have been a liability. All she had left was to pray for her friends and hope the impression that they were gaining the upper hand was indeed the correct one.

Voldemort was beginning to tire, he was not used to long battles as most times people froze at the mere sight of him. Even the brat's father hadn't put up as much fight as this, the dark lord was now regretting not taking longer to get used to this body. Voldemort didn't think they would put up any kind of a fight. His plan was foolproof, kill the boy and then the girls before apparating away to celebrate his victory.

He was not about to retreat from three children, his ego wouldn't allow that. This was his chance to finish off what he began all those years ago. He was going to have to be quick though before the aurors began to show up.

The trouble was these three appeared to anticipate his every move and even thought, if this was a form of legilimency then they were also masters of occlumency. He couldn't get a scan on the most basic of surface thoughts from any of them, he was going to have to try something different. The pop of a house elf distracted him for only a fraction of a second, who pays attention to a house elf?

Harry, Hermione and Luna were battered, bruised and bleeding while still throwing everything at Voldemort, so far they were holding their own. They also suspected the arrivals of the aurors must be imminent, they had no intention of allowing this snake to crawl back into his hole.

The trio all saw Cas appear in her elf form and Voldemort ignore her, you ignored Cas at your peril. Luna had them moving and firing before the dark lord realised what was about to happen.

George Goyle had been sitting on the ground in absolute agony, his arms weren't just broken but shattered in multiple places. He was hoping his master would hurry up and kill these brats so he could be healed. His beautiful silver hand hung useless at the end of an arm with umpteen fractures.

He suddenly found himself shooting through the air and colliding into the back of his master's legs. Voldemort's concentration was broken, as were his legs. This was not the worst of it though for the dark lord, three reducto's connected squarely with his torso as he was flung forward. The dark lord was now the bright red lord as blood and tissue blasted all over Goyle senior.

Seeing that it was now over, both girls raced to embrace Cas as Harry heard a familiar voice behind him.

"Holy fuck Potter, what the hell was that all about?"

Harry didn't even turn around, he would know that voice anywhere. "That Dawson, was the piece of shit who murdered my parents. He kidnapped Danni then came here today to finish off the last of the Potters, big mistake!"

Before any more could be said, multiple pops announced the arrival of the aurors, six of them and all with wand's drawn. It must have been quite a sight to apparate into, devastation, fire smoke and blood. A house elf hugging and healing two girls was the only sign that there were magical users present, the Potter's wands were safely tucked in their disillusioned wrist holsters.

"Identify yourselves and explain what's going on here?" the lead auror shouted.

Matt hadn't a clue who these strangers in the coloured robes were or how to begin to answer that so said nothing, he noticed Harry seemed to stand just that little bit straighter as he faced these men down.

"I am Lord Potter, what happened here is that Voldemort chose to pay us a visit while we were at school. He'd dead but the death eater he brought with him may still be alive. As the bastard had kidnapped my baby sister as a hostage I'm rather hoping he's not!"

One of the aurors apparently had an honours degree in stating the blindingly obvious, "But this is a muggle school!"

"Yes, well spotted! I think I'll have to try and discourage Nym from becoming an auror if they are all as thick as you."

The now embarrassed auror pointed his wand at their five friends, "Does that mean they're muggles?"

Harry had barely nodded when the auror fired an obliviate curse straight at Jamie. It didn't connect due to the shield charm Luna had instantly erected, he didn't get a chance to fire another as Hermione didn't hesitate and stunned him.

Harry was incandescent with rage, "You have the nerve to turn up here, after we have done your job for you, and then try to obliviate our friends!"

All three Potter wands were now trained on the five aurors left standing, the one in charge tried to regain control of the situation. "It's standard operating procedure to obliviate muggles who discover our world. I'm sorry Lord Potter but these are ministry laws."

"Not today sir, ministers and ministry law can be changed. An unprovoked attack on our friends is a sure fire way to start the process! To get everyone out of harm's way I broke the glass that set off the fire alarm, between that and the explosions you can expect this place to be crawling with police and fire department in moments. Not forgetting there are eleven hundred people taking shelter behind the school, do you really want to spend this vital time fighting the people who just rid this world of Voldemort?"

He could see the aurors were rattled so pressed home his advantage, "My advice would be to get Voldemort and the death eater out of here, the place looks like a car bomb went off so that could be your excuse. I also think you badly need reinforcements and it would be a good career move to get Amelia Bones down here as quickly as possible."

As this scene was playing out, Cas had popped over to the group of friends, changing into her human disguise as she went. "Listen to me very carefully, hold on to me and I can get us out of here. If curses start flying they might not be able to protect you lot and themselves at

the same time. I can take you to the manor, which will be the safest place for you at the moment."

Having witnessed one battle of light beams, they had no wish to see another one where they would be targeted. It was a strain but, as they weren't travelling very far, Cas managed to pop the five of them out of there.

The auror in charge now realised he'd been played, "You three don't move from that spot, I don't care if you are on first name terms with the minister. Stay put!"

As the adrenalin began leaving their systems, the trio just sat on the ground and waited. Harry was in the middle of course, with both girls resting their heads on his shoulders. Hedwig poked her head out of Luna's pocket and was soon receiving serious petting from her three chicks. Cas had quickly healed the girl's cuts but right about now they could do with some of Maia's wonderful potions.

The five appeared with Cas in the library of Potter Manor. They were greeted by the sight of a sobbing Emma, clutching a sleeping Danni to her chest.

Cas raced toward her mistress, "They did it! The three of them are fine and they did it!"

The large portrait over the fireplace resounded to a victory yell from Jonathon while Martha burst into tears of relief. Portraits moving and shouting proved to be a step too far for Donna, she fainted. Jamie managed to catch her before she hit the ground and manoeuvred the girl onto a sofa, "Eh, Mrs Granger, please don't take this the wrong way but are you all aliens?"

It was a much relieved Emma who answered the group, "No Jamie, I'm a dentist!"

With comedic timing par excellence, Sirius and Maia chose that precise moment to apparate into the library. Watching as the two appeared right next to her out of thin air was too much for Claire, her eyes rolled in her head as she too fainted and required a sofa.

A wide-eyed Sirius asked, "Ok, what did we miss?"

-oOoOo-

The trio just sat there quietly, stroking baby Hedwig and talking over their bond as the world appeared to continue around them. It was only with the arrival of Amelia Bones that they chose to raise their heads and look up.

"Can I assume these are the friends that Susan has met and that they are safely ensconced in Potter Manor?"

Harry answered for the three of them, "Yes to both of those questions. We had just defeated your dark lord when an auror began trying to curse our friends, without even speaking to them. Sorry but we couldn't allow that."

Amelia actually winced at the way Harry said 'your dark lord', the boy who saved them again should not be forced to leave their community. From her own experience with Susan and their other magical friends she understood the loyalty these three inspired, that loyalty was returned in equal measure by the Potters. Britain as a whole owed Harry, Hermione and Luna Potter a debt that could never be repaid, it was time to cut them some slack.

"If I can have your word that they won't reveal our world's existence, we can give them exceptions."

This drew a slight smile from Harry, "Thank you Madam Bones, we really do appreciate that more than you know. If you don't need us for anything else I would like to get my wives home, we've had quite the morning."

As understatement goes, Amelia thought that was one of the most outrageous she'd ever heard. Sirius and Maia arrived and rushed straight to the kids, hugs and kisses followed as Amelia spoke, "Take them home, they will have to visit the ministry tomorrow to give statements. If the last time is any indicator, witches and wizards the length and breadth of the country will go crazy for a couple of days."

On behalf of the British magical community, I want to offer our heartfelt thanks."

-oOoOo-

They arrived back in the manor and Emma tried to pounce on them, she was hampered though by still having a sleeping Danni in her arms. Harry solved her problem by scooping his baby sister into his arms, revelling in physical proof that she was fine. Tears now flowed freely, they had killed at least one man today but the tears were for Danni. Just by being considered his sister, she had been abducted and almost gotten killed.

He felt both his wives put their arms around him as their family was complete, it was Hermione who spoke though. "Harry, don't go blaming yourself for this. You were willing to give your life in an attempt to save her. No sister could ask for more and we all know Danni thinks you're the best big brother in the world."

Harry kissed Danni on the forehead before kissing his wives properly, "Thanks for that Hermione, I was talking myself into a funk. You both were magnificent today, I couldn't be prouder of you."

A theatrical clearing of a throat had them turning to face their friends, "Just what are you three?" asked Matt.

Harry understood the next few moments were critical, if their friends didn't accept them now there was no going back. They could easily be obliviated but the Potter's would know acceptance was never going to be possible. Their dream and probably their friendship would begin to die. "I am Lord Harry James Potter, lord of the ancient and noble house of Potter and I am a wizard. This is the Lady Hermione Jane Potter and the Lady Luna Potter, both are witches and have been my wives for the last three wonderful years."

This was information overload for Jillian, she promptly fainted.

-oOoOo-

The twins were in transfiguration with McGonagall when their mirror started to vibrate, this immediately worried them. Sirius would be aware they were in class and wouldn't contact them unless it was of vital importance. "Excuse us professor, but we really need to answer this."

The entire class, including the headmistress waited in silence as Fred spoke the activation code and Sirius Black's voice could clearly be heard. "Hey guys, this is going to be everywhere shortly so could you make sure the crew know the truth in case they worry. Voldemort visited Wyedean High this morning looking for Harry and got his arse well and truly handed to him. All three are rather shaken but otherwise fine, the ministry took what was left of the dark lord's body away. Can you pass on the message as soon as possible and we'll contact you later about the weekend, we may be heading for sunnier climes."

McGonagall's head appears over the twin's shoulders, "Sirius Black, if this is some sort of sick prank I will have your guts for garters!"

The venom in his voice could clearly be heard by everyone, "Minerva, the bastard kidnapped little Danni in the hope the kids wouldn't fight back. Everyone here is ok and they even managed to evacuate the school so no one else was hurt. It's quite clear he had information that put our entire family in danger, if I find out who it was there won't be enough left of them to use for garters!"

Minerva had her hand over her heart, part of her wanted to celebrate. The other, more sensible part felt horrible at what the Potters had to endure. "Give them my best Sirius."

He acknowledged his old head of house before signing off.

The class were stunned, no one made a sound or moved until McGonagall broke the spell, "Well you two, I would suggest there are some people you need to speak to right now. Go!"

The twins shot out their seats toward the door and the cheering had broken out before they left the class. McGonagall decided there and then that classes would be cancelled for the rest of the day, this news

would spread like wildfire and the students would be unteachable from excitement.

-oOoOo-

Emma ensured the five of them phoned home, stating where they were and that they were all unhurt and safe. It would soon be all over the muggle media that a car bomb had exploded at a school, swift action by staff and the emergency services meant that there were no casualties to report. Their cover story for their parents was that Emma had been passing by and picked them all up. Speculation that this was not an act of terrorism, rather a prank played on the headmaster's car that went badly wrong would be the story that would emerge. This soon gained some measure of credibility, especially with the ministry pulling some strings behind the scenes.

They were all eating sandwiches and drinking tea as the story of who the Potters actually were unfolded, with Jonathon and Martha filling in the blanks their friends found it impossible to argue against the existence of magic.

Harry couldn't help but apologise, "I'm really sorry about all the lying we've had to do to you guys but it's one of the strictest rules in our community, non magical's are not allowed to know of our existence. You saw the way that auror reacted earlier, that's why you can't tell anyone about today."

Jamie was shaking his head, "Who the hell would believe us? I watched the whole thing and I don't believe it!"

Donna though spotted the potential problem, "What will happen when we leave here though, will those men come and do that thing to make us forget? They seemed pretty anxious to ensure we couldn't remember anything."

Hermione tried to answer, "In certain cases it's not only allowed but necessary for non magical people to know the secret. Neither my mum nor dad were magical but with a daughter who's a witch, they obviously would need to be told about it."

This appeared to make some kind of crazy sense to them so Luna continued, "That man we stopped today was a homicidal maniac who, along with his followers, practiced genocide on hundreds, if not thousands of people. Another thing you need to know is that our husband is somewhat famous in the magical community, Susan's aunt is effectively our prime minister. We have a lot of influence and powerful friends, which helped today in allowing you to keep your memories intact."

Emma tried to help her children, "It really was very hard for them not to tell you everything, especially after they started magical school. They are the first students ever to attend both sets of schools at the same time, you five were a big part of why that decision was made. Hogwarts is normally a residential school with no options to continue any other form of education, they had no intention of leaving their friends."

Jillian had listened to everything but her mind had fixated on one part, "Ok, I think we get all that but married for three years and with two wives? Is that normal in the magical community and are any of the rest of their friends married?"

It was actually Martha who attempted to explain this one, coming from a talking painting just seemed to lend credence to her words. In a world where paintings could hold a conversation with you then anything was possible. "No it most certainly is not normal, but then with these three the word 'normal' is being redefined. They have a bond that goes beyond marriage, their souls are actually mated which occurs once every few centuries and never before with a trio. Their biggest worry is that their friends won't accept them, this is true on both sides of the magical divide. This is a situation they had absolutely no control over, they were brought together by fate."

The five got their last shock of the day when Nym exploded out bright green flames from the fireplace, she instantly pounced on the trio, "Are you alright? You were supposed to wait until I was there to cover your backs!"

They were hugging her back as Hermione replied, "Sorry Nym, Voldemort chose the time and place. We sure could have used your help though! What are you doing here?"

"McGonagall cancelled lessons for the day and allowed me to use the floo in her office. There's a massive party building up a head of steam in Hogwarts, if you three thought it was bad before just wait until you see it now. They will probably replace the fountain in the ministry with statues of you three."

Harry shuddered at the thought, "It would have to be for six, without Hedwig, Cas and little Danni we would have been toast."

Luna went and fetched the wizarding photograph of the three of them with the white phoenix to show their friends. "You're not exactly seeing our Hedwig at her brilliant best, this was taken at the summer and was front page news in magical Britain."

They all gazed upon the magnificent bird in the picture with a sense of awe, here was their three friends as they really were. They looked every inch the lord and ladies they claimed to be.

Harry still cradled his sleeping sister in his arms and showed no sign of putting her down any time soon, he asked the question that they needed to know the answer to, "Well guys, now you know the truth, can we still be friends?"

Donna as usual was first to offer her opinion, "Well it's clear to me you told us as much of the truth as you possibly could. You even introduced us to your magical friends and that couldn't have been easy. To me you're just Harry, Hermione and Luna who happen to have super-powers without the silly costumes and capes. No quick-changes in phone boxes required!"

Jamie took a long comical look at the manor around him before answering, "Next time we go for pizza – you're buying!"

This had them all laughing as the tension started to disappear and they fell into their usual form of banter.

"Hey Potter, if I find out you've been using this magic malarkey to beat me at bowling you know I'm going to kick your arse." Having watched what Harry could do today, they all understood this was Matt's form of humour.

"You are going to be a bit more specific than that Dawson, remember there are three Potters here."

Claire let out a gasp, "No wonder Luna's eyes glaze over every time she thinks about Harry's kisses, she's married to him!"

Jillian was blushing as she thought out loud, "I don't blame her, he looked so hot today during that fight."

Nym burst out laughing, "Just wait until you see him in Quidditch robes, sitting on his broom."

The five blank stares earned a moan from Maia, "Aw Nym, why did you have to bring that subject up? Now we'll all be bored to death as Sirius tells everyone how good he is at the sport!"

The laughter came easy as the last of the tension was banished and the conversations became a lot more open and animated. Sirius though did manage to steer it back to Quidditch on more than one occasion.

-oOoOo-

Minerva was sitting at the staff table watching her students enjoy themselves, their party was interrupted though by an exceedingly irate Amelia Bones and the four aurors who accompanied her. As they marched toward the staff table the party atmosphere plummeted, it was blindingly obvious something was seriously wrong.

"Good evening minister, may I ask what brings you to Hogwarts?" Minerva asked.

"The death eater accompanying Voldemort is still alive and will stand trial tomorrow, I'm here because he received all his information from this school. Thousands of lives, most of them children were placed

under severe risk because of this. The death eater's name was George Goyle and his son got all their information from Ronald Weasley. It is my intention to take both of them to the ministry for questioning, their parents will meet us there."

Ginny and Neville were sitting with their friends at the Hufflepuff table when the little redhead launched herself like a moron seeking missile, directly at her brother. All thoughts of magic fled her brain at the anger she felt, this was probably a good thing for Ron. With arms and legs flailing blows down upon the boy she was screaming loud enough to be mistaken for Molly. "How could you, they were nearly killed and Danni too! Harry will rip your head off and piss down your neck if one hair of her head was harmed. You are no brother of mine!"

It took Neville, the twins and Percy combined to pull the little lion off the prat, who then made the monumental mistake of opening his mouth. "He killed him, didn't he? They should be thanking me for helping..."

While others sat in stunned disbelief, Susan hit him harder than she had ever hit anyone before. Ron went down as Cedric and Hannah battled to constrain her in case she murdered him.

"Auntie Amelia, you better get him out of here before we kill him. Ginny's right though, nothing will be able to protect him from Harry."

Minerva was disgusted with the boy, Gregory was the son of a death eater and as thick as hippogriff shit but there was no excuse for Weasley. "Madam Minister, I feel I must point out a conversation I had with Lord Black. He also swore retribution on whoever endangered his family by supplying that information. These two might require protective custody."

Gregory Goyle had quickly found himself sitting alone at the Slytherin table, these ambitious witches and wizards were not about to go against the combined forces of the minister, Potters and Lord Black. Goyle had played a dangerous game and lost, worst still he had been found out. There would be no support forthcoming from Slytherin house.

The two boys were led away from a much-subdued Hogwarts great hall, they had well and truly burst the party atmosphere that had prevailed earlier.

-oOoOo-

Molly Weasley was distraught, she and Arthur were at the ministry and had quickly given their approval for Ron to be questioned under truth serum in their presence. She was thankful that her youngest son was unaware of why the information was required but her heart broke at the callous way he didn't care if it had led to the Potters' deaths. That she had raised a son who could disregard the life of a toddler like that had her sobbing. Both parents were at a total loss of what to do with him.

Amelia as usual spoke her mind, "The bruises your son received were delivered by Ginny and my Susan, both were incensed by his actions. While he hasn't broken any laws I feel returning him to Hogwarts would be a grave mistake. You both know this will find its way into the papers and then all hell is going to break loose, it might be better to get him out the country for a while." The minister thought that it might die down in twenty or thirty years, the Goyle boy understood exactly what he was doing and would see his wand snapped and magic bound. If she was honest with herself Amelia would like to see the same happening to this nasty piece of work, she was so proud of the way Susan had stood up for her friends and decked the little bastard.

Arthur thought it was ironic that they had been discussing their children's friendship with the Potters, those same friendships would be the only thing that would save the Weasley family when the story broke. Ron's insane jealousy and selfishness could have brought the entire family down with him. He would have to contact Charlie and Bill to see if they could take their youngest brother, at least until summer. Amelia was right about one thing, Ron going back to Hogwarts would probably result in him flying off the astronomy tower without a broom. Arthur had raised six boys and was baffled at where he went wrong with his youngest.

-oOoOo-

Scotland in May is one of the most beautiful places on the planet, so thought one Harry Potter as he flew into the packed Quidditch stadium for the Gryffindor replay. McGonagall had rescheduled all the games to provide a summer of Quidditch in celebration of the hard won freedom their community now enjoyed. With the dark lord well and truly banished and a more than competent minister in post, things in magical Britain had never looked brighter.

Harry's gaze drifted to the stand where their family and friends all sat together, a family that was growing as Maia Black was pregnant. Sirius though might not live to see his son born if he didn't stop treating her as if she was made from fragile pieces of porcelain, the poor marauder was totally out of his depth. Narcissa was also sitting there, she'd served her time in Azkaban and this was the family's way of showing her public support.

The other big change was that Matt, Jillian, Jamie Claire and Donna were also sitting in the stand, dressed in Hufflepuff Quidditch jerseys with the name Potter on the back. Jillian's even had the number three on it as a joke, they all took it well since this was actually Hermione's team number. The two groups of friends had lost their distinction as the magical wall had been breeched, Jamie had become quite enamoured with Hannah, a feeling that was being reciprocated by the Hufflepuff.

Combined trips over the Christmas holidays to both magical and muggle shops and events had forged feelings of respect for both ways of life, the three Potters had been ecstatic! Arrival back at Hogwarts in January had been as low key as they could make it. With no Draco to constantly snipe at them and Ron filling sacks with dragon dung in Romania, Hogwarts actually became pleasurable. They were looking forward to starting their OWL's next year, with Ancient Runes and Arithmancy added to their timetable. Minerva had promised to try and group their classes and cause the minimum disruption to their Wyedean schedule as possible, as the rest of the Hogwarts students stayed in the castle it didn't really matter to them.

Cedric flew down to shake hands with the Gryffindor captain, this was now Angelina as McGonagall had demanded Wood be removed as captain. The only reason he was still playing was Gryffindor had no one else for that position. For a Gryffindor to so publicly not rush to their friend's aid was a damning indictment, especially if you considered victory in a school game more important.

Amid much cheering the game got under way with the Potters taking control of the quaffle from the first whistle. They were living their dream today as all their friends and family sat together in the stand to watch the match. Free from the threats that had hung over them for years, they were going to enjoy today.

When you factored in that Oliver's confidence was at an all time low, then it was easy to understand the Hufflepuff supporters screaming themselves hoarse as their team built up a commanding lead. No one in the crowd had ever seen a Quidditch display quite like the one the Hufflepuff chasers put on that day, almost scoring at will as their lead became unassailable. The Gryffindor chasers may be good but the Puffs were inspired and had scouts in the crowd salivating on their notes. A perfect day was only marred by a lighter Ginny on a faster broom beating Cedric to the snitch. As his team were one hundred and ninety points ahead at the time, it didn't dent their captain's enjoyment of the day and he was quite gracious in praise of the young rival seeker.

The fans were on the pitch and Harry soon found himself being hugged and kissed by their female friends, since discovering the trio were indeed married the whole dynamics of the group had settled down.

Jamie and Matt were hugging the Mrs Potters before the droll humour made an appearance. "Hell of a game there Potters, just please never try any of those moves when you've got us on the back of those brooms! I thought I had seen you fly at the manor but that display was something else, basketball will seem so tame after watching that."

The group made their way back to the castle as everyone was invited to the after match celebrations, Harry was walking with a wife on

each arm and Danni of course perched on his shoulders. They were surrounded by friends and family while Hedwig circled overhead and sang a wonderfully joyous song. Harry was silently thanking whatever deity was responsible for Hedwig appearing that night of his birthday, he had come a long way since those days spent hungry and alone in the cupboard.

-oOoOo-

Fate looked down upon the scene with an immense sense of satisfaction, muggles mixing happily with magicals with a phoenix and elf thrown in for good measure. Fate's Gambit had paid off handsomely and the Potters deserved all the happiness that was coming their way. She would still be keeping a rather close eye on the situation though, she intended to ensure they got their 'happily ever after' and woe betide anyone who tried to mess with fate.

The End.

Thanks for reading.